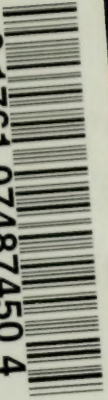



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A PATHFINDER  
BY P. DEMING







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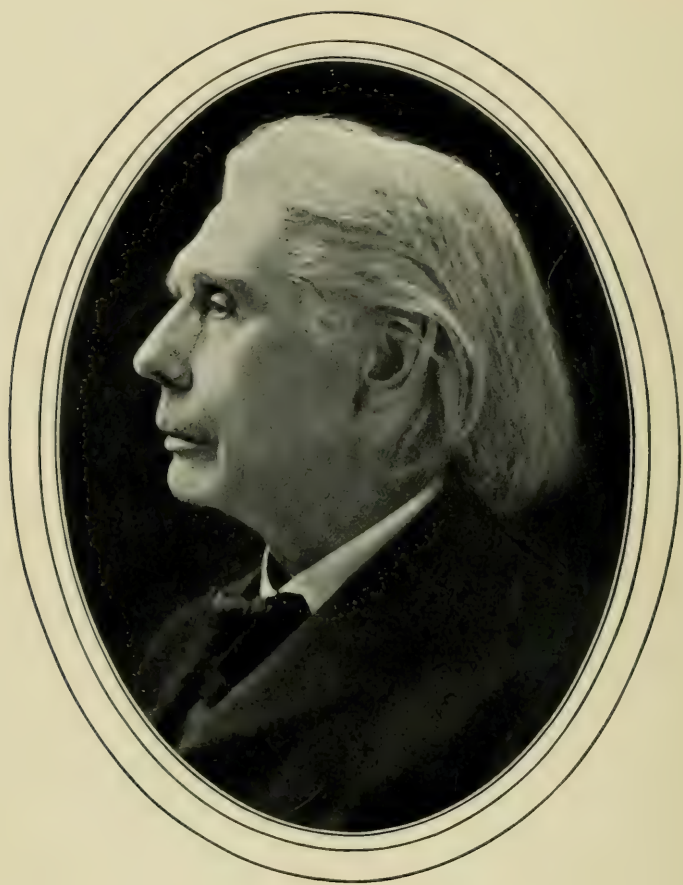
**HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & CO.**

**BOSTON AND NEW YORK.**

# THE STORY OF A PATHFINDER







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# THE STORY OF A PATHFINDER

BY  
*Philander*  
P. DEMING



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18.10.47

BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY  
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## NOTE

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Changes have been made in titles and substance in adapting the material to its present use.



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# THE STORY OF A PATHFINDER



## THE STORY OF A PATHFINDER

LADY MARY: — It is many years since I left that delightful reporting world about which you are so curious. But it is still vivid in my memory. I will try to give you a glimpse of that time of pioneering in letters, when the great dailies and the art of shorthand and the arts of the newspaper men were still young in America.

Please to bear in mind the fact that there was no court stenographer at that time, no convenient shorthand amanuensis at the hotel, no typewriters, and none of that quick transmission of intelligence which so enlivens us to-day. England was far away, and Asia and Africa and the great round world were in our consciousness as remote as the moon now is, or as our friendly neighbors are who have their

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canals and improvements in the planet Mars.

See me as I remember myself in those distant years when, all unknowing of my destiny, I was chosen by Providence, by my own aptitudes and willfulness, by the logic of events, by anything you may consent to, — chosen to be one of the lowly, toiling Pathfinders who then began to travel in paths along which multitudes have now followed, in finding their way in the modern world.

Try to forget the stately avenue, and the surroundings of your city home, and go with me to a lonely village in the shadow of the Adirondack forest. Go back with me also along the course of time. Let it be early in the forties. Please to remember that railroads are far-off phantoms, books are scarce, and print is sacred. Just by the little church we see the parsonage. And here is the brown-haired boy (the Pathfinder) in his father's study, delving

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among the few volumes that make up the library. The boy is weary with play out of doors, and has come in to search and to see. With what awe he opens a copy of Virgil! Hear how he sighs as he examines a page of the Greek text of Herodotus. Can he ever conquer these strange puzzles? — But what is this he has found now? His eyes are fixed upon a little pamphlet and he is very eager. He throws himself upon the carpet, and the minutes become hours while the afternoon wears away. He is very active and restless, but he studies until the summer sunlight ceases streaming in at the windows. Then he tosses the tiny pamphlet back among the books and rushes out again to play.

It is all very well for the young master to rush and shout. He may well be free while he can. But he will not escape. He has been fascinated,—snared and taken. That little pamphlet is a treatise on shorthand. The boy will return to it again and again.

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It will grow with his growth and mingle with his blood. His fond parents may regret it and he may lament his own proclivity, but this will not save him. The wonders and the surpassing delights of literature, with which, dear lady, you are so familiar, are scarcely more fatal than this little craze, this shorthand fever, when it seizes upon one of tender years. In the old days of which I am telling you, many victims were seized by it, in the lonely homes and quiet corners of the villages of America. It appeared that a great man, somewhere in England, had improved shorthand so as to give it increased power and virulence. We were easily captured. It was a sentimental time in American history. We all sang about the little girl that died and the flowers that grew upon her grave. New lights were just then flashing upon this new world. Who of us was not dazzled by John B. Gough, by phrenology, by mesmerism, by Morse and

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the telegraph, by "seeing the cars," by the spelling reform, and by phonography? There were but few teachers then — the only doctors who could cure these disorders. Many years passed before we recovered and became able sensibly to endure the new light, and rejoice in the wonderful life which somehow, mysteriously, came to us in the forties. Some of the *isms* then born have dwindled or perished, but others have become valuable additions to the modern world.

I will not describe the battle of the systems of shorthand (the old and the new) in that boy's brain. The little pamphlet, with its simple and antiquated plan, was driven out of his thoughts and affections, and supplanted after a tremendous struggle, by the new philosophical method, just arrived from England. There were many arguments with schoolmates and many trials of skill before this was accomplished. It was when the boy began to

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study Greek that the analysis of sounds in that beautiful language (as given in the grammar) and in phonography caught his fancy and captured him.

At this point in my narrative, I will jump the intervening years and show you that boy when he was introduced to a wider field, and began his work in the borderland of that wonderful world of letters, which you and I love so well.

See the youth, fresh from a New England college, with a lithe, active form and an eager face, standing in a cold December day, gazing at the old Capitol in Albany. "Will there be any chance for him there," he wonders.

. . . . .  
Ten days later the Legislature had organized, and that recent graduate sat in the Assembly Chamber, in a reporter's chair, his cheeks flaming with excitement, his eyes flashing, and his right hand driving a lead-pencil with great swiftness and

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vigor. Near him sat a large, muscular man, with rugged features and keen glances. The large man kept an anxious eye upon the young fellow. When the members shouted, and the speaker hammered, and the petitions and bills flew in a shower across the chamber to the clerk's desk, the large man looked uneasily at the youth who was working with such energy. The large man had a bundle of soft paper and three lead-pencils, sharpened and ready on the desk at his side. Suddenly he seized one of the pencils and began writing. It would not do for him, as editor and proprietor of a great party journal, to miss the business of the hour if the young man should in any way fail. He hoped the youth would succeed, but he did not believe he could. College graduates were not practical. This one seemed different from the others, but he doubted him. That a boy from the country should be able to write very rapidly,

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and at the same time plain enough and accurately enough to print from, and should be quick enough and know enough to catch and sift out the hubbub of the New York Assembly, when it was in a fit or a spasm, seemed improbable. The new members were becoming unusually noisy. A little debate had sprung up and symptoms of a convulsion began to appear. It would not do to risk the young man. The editor almost wondered why he had given this young chap a trial. He remembered how he himself had labored and studied before he could pack every item of a legislative day in its most condensed form in his columns—doing it while the sounds were in the air, and sending it to the office and putting it in type from hour to hour, as the business proceeded. He had to press on to the very last minute before issuing his evening paper. Surely this youth without experience could not be trusted.

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There was a little episode. A bill had been fixed up with a title so mixed, so complicated and designedly meaningless, that it was utterly impossible to grasp the idea with that quick grip and instant condensation which the flying pencil of the sketch reporter demands. In a moment the hurried words had died upon the air, and the youth was facing, with a sudden sinking of the heart and a pang, the fact of an item lost, when in a fierce whisper there came to his ear the words "State Military Board." It was the editor, who without looking up from his own swift writing had felt the situation. It was help to the youth in a great struggle. The words were quickly recorded and the balk saved.

Not long after this episode there was a lull; the storm abated and the House adjourned for the day.

What a half-hour it had been for the youth who had never until the last fort-

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night been in the city ! But *was* it a half-hour ? He glanced at the large clock which hung upon the wall and then at a poor silver watch which he took from his pocket. It was wonderful, but there was no doubt about it. The House had been in session exactly one hour and forty minutes. It was the common experience of new men. He had not yet learned how time seems lost in a struggle. The editor had told the youth that the reporting was difficult — more so than shorthand. Had the graduate with his college learning succeeded or had he failed ? He began to look at his pile of papers. He had numbered his strips before he began the work. The editor had told him that this would be the better way. He had told him also that to save time he might omit the *Mr.* before the names of members, as the printers would supply it. The youth discovered that he had used the package of slips down to number sixty-three. He

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took the papers in his hand. Immediately a long arm and open palm, from the editor, came reaching out toward him and mutely but imperiously demanding the papers. With a thrill passing through him the young fellow delivered his work. The famous editor, reporter, and proprietor of the great political journal began to examine the writings.

The trial was over. What would be the decision? In college this young man had been known as the philosopher. According to his philosophy he should have been calm, but there was too much at stake just now for that. As an immortal being he ought to have been superior to the situation; but he did not feel so. There was wealth and power all around him, but he was destitute. He rested, however, upon a past that was better for his purpose than he knew. A home among the lonely hills, days of reflection in the solemn silence, some years of study and

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manual labor, and a great longing to see the world — these had been his boyhood experiences. Then had followed in his early youth, in the long winter evenings, that study and practice of shorthand, which he vaguely hoped would be for him the key with which he could unlock the door that would admit him to the world.

In this study he had worn himself thin, and taxed his relatives to read for him until they had all declared him a nuisance. In the little village church on Sundays he had made himself so conspicuous, trying to take the sermons, that some of the people had objected to this desecration of the place and the day. But the lad had succeeded, and had gained a kind of skill that after all turned out to be absolutely good for nothing in that day and that part of the world. It was found to be true that the art was used in England, but the youth was not

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going to England. And the fact that a few shorthand men were busy in Congress was discovered; but he was too young to go to Congress. And so his enterprise had failed.

After the shorthand mistake came the college fever. Here was the key, sure and often tried, that would open the door and admit this restless spirit to that wonderful world of which the youth read and dreamed so much. But I am not telling the college story. It is enough to say that it excels all else. The deathless friendships, the immortal hopes, and the "long, long thoughts" that have thrilled so many, thrilled this youth also. But now that was a memory; and he seemed to remember all of it as he sat waiting for the editor to pass upon his first trial papers. He remembered his classmates; he recalled his struggles (and squabbles) with poverty. His loneliness (without means, wholly unknowing and unknown

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in the city), settled down upon him heavily and painfully as he sat and waited. The busy newspaper men (the New York correspondents, who seemed to him so remarkable), one by one, having finished their papers, rose and went away. And then the editor ceased reading the graduate's work and laid the leaves upon the desk at his side. Then he looked at the young man with a steady gaze. The philosopher knew that he ought to be calm, but he was not. He shrank and quivered before that eagle-like glance that seemed to pierce him. At last the editor's lips parted and he uttered a word that he very rarely used. He said "*Thunder!*" The meaning of the ejaculation was not very apparent.

"I do not quite see," explained the editor, "how you learned to get that debate so fairly and all right. Your entire report is good, first-rate for the first time of trying."

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The blood flew to the youth's face, and his lips began to quiver.

"There will be no trouble," pursued the editor, turning away and picking up his new silk hat and the bundle of papers. "You had better find yourself a boarding-place for the winter, and come down to the office in the morning. I will need you for the session." "Yes—sir," replied the youth, with an effort which did not, after all, conceal his emotion. The great man walked away; the young man also soon found his hat and departed. He paused in the dark ante-room or hall to dry the happy tears before going into the street. Where was his college philosophy! Since the time of his graduation, five months before, a load had been gathering upon his heart. He had not, until this glad day, found how to use the wonderful college key that was to unlock for him the door that would admit him to the world.

There had been sad days at home, pain-

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fully waiting and planning and dreaming. He did not tell the editor how he had got a file of the last year's Albany newspapers, and at home had worked day and night for two months copying the editor's legislative reports as if his life depended upon it. There was not a phrase or a condensation, which the editor had contrived, with which the youth's fingers were not familiar before he went to Albany.

But I need not continue the story of this first winter in the city. Much of it has faded with the passing years. It may be well to mention, however, that sketching was alternated with shorthand work before the session was half over. That wonderful worker and writer, Henry J. Raymond, was a member of the House that year. For the new reporter it was like reading a romance to listen to the great editor of "The Times" as he kindly confided to the youth incidents in his successful career. Mr. Raymond was a re-

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markable reporter, who did not use shorthand. He conveyed the secret of his method in a few words. I will not pause to explain it here. It is enough to mention the fact that he made verbatim reports (accepted as such) of the speeches of Webster, Everett and other orators, using only the common alphabet in his note-taking. He told the youth that winter, in plaintive musings, of the long, long nights of toil it had cost him to write out his notes, as he floated in the steamers down the Hudson toward New York and the office of the old "Courier and Inquirer," for which he labored. Mr. Raymond greatly valued shorthand, although he did not use it. He made lively shorthand work for the newcomer that winter. The young man reported many columns of Mr. Raymond's earnest eloquence.

The scene comes before me as I write. Many faces peer out from the dark corners of the old Assembly Chamber and

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the darker corners of memory. How the flying pencil followed those men and how their words have faded! Of all that busy session, scarce a sentence or a word remains. But the little incidents, the kindly acts, the flowers of every day, that spring and bloom from the heart of humanity, are as fresh, bright, and beautiful as the day they were created. How strangely these outlive all else in our history! The commendations of Mr. Raymond stand engraved as upon a tablet of brass; but of all the many columns to which he referred in those commendations, scarce a syllable remains.

And of the daily task, the columns done for the large man, good Editor George, only an incident that reached the heart has survived the years. How could the poor, little but beloved, school-district libraries be protected? That was the question involved. One coming from a lonely place in the country knew how

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the souls that hungered there would feel the blow if the legislature killed the libraries. But that ruthless plan was suggested and urged and seemed likely to be carried out. What could the reporter do or say? Could he venture to talk with some of the editors about it? Memory paints the climb up the narrow stair to the sanctum of Editor George, the opening of the door, the cobwebs inside, the vast stack of tumbled exchanges, the room for the time vacant, and the great editor's empty chair, the long table, the pen, the slips of paper lying ready, and the gigantic glass inkstand from which were daily fished out articles that shook the city and sometimes echoed around the world. The heart has not forgot the thump it gave when the impulse seized it then and there to venture, uninvited and unallowed, upon sitting in that editor's chair and writing the first editorial of a lifetime.

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It did not take very long. The voices of a million little readers seemed to be heard pleading for just those volumes, whose dilapidated condition had led the state superintendent to condemn them and suggest their banishment from the school world. The reporter remembered his home, and his experiences in teaching and "boarding around." He knew that it was not the well-kept books, but those that were worn to rags, that were loved and were doing good. His mind and heart being full of these ideas, he had soon placed them upon paper, and left an appropriate editorial of suitable length upon the table. Memory pictures the sudden panic that came when that work of the heart was done, and how the perpetrator fled from the office as if detectives had discovered and pursued him. Would his editorial be regarded as an impertinence? Or would the editor kindly use it? There is a vivid reminiscence of the

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thrill that came when the editorial was found in the evening paper! There was a brief debate next day in the Assembly about the libraries, and the reporter heard the editorial alluded to and commended by a member in his argument, as most convincing and sincere. That brief debate in which the heart was so interested, now shines out as the best remembered item of the discussions of that eventful winter.

Here again I reach a place where I have to pass over an interval, — to jump some years of legislative experience in New England and New York, in order to reach and tell the story of the reporter in a new field, where there was indeed serious pathfinding to be accomplished. The courts of law, with all their authority, their precedents, and their ancient customs, yet had great need of the lowly pathfinders, though the courts had not

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acknowledged it or known it in the centuries of the past.

Look at the change brought about by the reporter, and from the story of one learn all.

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The change, though very important, came about quietly—as oft in the stilly night the snowflakes fall and cover all the scene. In 1865 (and for many years before that date) the judges of the courts, and the lawyers in the various States of the Union, were trying to do an impossible thing in letters. They were endeavoring to reduce to ordinary writing and to record with scrupulous exactness the testimony (too often ungovernable talk) of independent American citizens and others upon the witness-stand. The painful effort and slow anguish of those days are still remembered, and spoken of with almost a shudder, by the few old benchers of that

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time, who have lingered on, and who have come with us into the new century. It will be seen that the judge's record had to be the standard. When the record of the opposing attorneys differed, the judge had to decide what the evidence of the witness had been. And when he did not know, he had to *rule*. It is easy to see how painful this was. And then, the record! It is not extravagant to mention it as an awful record. For it involved then, as such records do now, the right to property, to personal liberty, and to life.

At the time in question there were about one hundred and twenty-five competent shorthand reporters in the United States. They were busy doing congressional, legislative, and newspaper work. It was the dream of some of these men that shorthand might come to be generally used to take the evidence of witnesses in court. Among these shorthand writers was the reporter whose coming to the

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city has been described. He came to Albany early in the sixties. It was among his plans to introduce shorthand into the Supreme Court circuits of the State, held in Albany and adjacent counties. His efforts to do this sharply illustrate the situation at that time, and reveal the nature of the important change just then beginning in the courts.

The reporter sought and found opportunities to see each of the three judges of the Supreme Court of the third judicial district, New York, in which district Albany is included. The reporter was treated with consideration by all of the judges, but some objections to the proposed experiment were made. One of the Supreme Court justices explained that he was himself a very rapid penman, and he did not quite see how any one could write more rapidly than he did. He felt compelled to say, also, that he was so accustomed to writing the evidence that he did not think

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he could try a case without a pen in his hand. But his view soon changed, and he became an earnest advocate of the proposed new method. The other two judges did not object to the experiment. They were willing to try any plan the lawyers would favor.

Soon October came, and the November circuit (1865) to be held in the city hall at Albany was drawing near. It was to be an eventful circuit. Besides other important cases, a well-known citizen was to be tried for the homicide of another citizen who had been well known. The reporter saw the judge who was to hold the circuit. The judge said he would object to nothing that the lawyers would consent to, and advised the reporter to see the district attorney of the county, and the attorney for the defense, in the case of the homicide, which was of so much interest to the city.

The reporter's visit to the office of the

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district attorney was an incident the details of which he vividly remembered. Perhaps it is and was the duty of every public prosecutor to assume an aspect of great severity. The reporter entered the office of this officer, with whom he was not personally acquainted, and stood for a moment just inside the door. The district attorney rose from his chair and glared at the stranger with a withering effect. The reporter stated that he was a stenographic writer; that he desired to take the evidence at the approaching circuit, and especially the evidence in the important homicide case; that he had seen the judge, who did not object; that he had learned that the district attorney, to whom he was then speaking, had thought the case of such importance that the attorney-general of the State was to aid him in the prosecution, and that the defense not only had a lawyer of celebrity as attorney, but had also secured

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as counsel to try the case the Hon. Lyman Tremain, who was of national reputation.

Upon this statement the countenance of the district attorney assumed an aspect that was not merely severe but determinedly repellent. So far as was possible to one whose appearance was naturally pleasant his face became terrible. His eyes glowed with peculiar fire. He took a step backward as if to avoid contamination, and said with a brazen effect, "Sir, we will not need you." The reporter passed out of the office as an intruder passes out who is suspected of interfering in a case, with criminal intentions. He could not but acknowledge to himself that the manner of the district attorney was a thing well put on.

At the office of the attorney for the defense, the reporter met with another repulse. "Would it not be well," he asked, "to try the shorthand method of

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taking the evidence in that case next week? I am a stenographic writer."

"I do not see," replied the attorney (Mr. Hadley), "any way to make shorthand available. I reported speeches with shorthand in England; I know about it. In this matter here we must have the evidence to use as we proceed with the trial, and we cannot read your shorthand notes."

"But I can read them for you," said the reporter, enthusiastically, "and the judge does not object."

"Sir," said the lawyer sternly, "we will not need you."

The reporter departed, but he did not feel satisfied. The next morning he again called upon Mr. Hadley, and found him hard at work in his office. The reporter said, "It has seemed to me, after all, that there may be a way about this shorthand which —"

"Have I not already told you," shouted

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the lawyer, interrupting, "that we cannot make shorthand available? What do you mean by coming here in this manner?" And the lawyer rose from his chair, and, taking a ruler from his table, balanced it in his hand and gazed expressively at the persistent stranger. The reporter quickly left the office, reflecting as he did so upon the fact that he had at least advertised the shorthand movement, for which he was trying to gain a place in the courts.

Here the scene changed to the courtroom in the city hall at Albany, and to a date two weeks later than the time of the events above narrated. In order to look in upon the scene, let us go into the city hall. We find the long and lofty room, in which the circuit of the Supreme Court (and Court of Oyer and Terminer) is held, crowded with people. The case of the homicide is on trial. The Hon. Lyman Tremain is addressing the court in a very

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earnest manner. To appreciate his argument, it is necessary to bear in mind that rule of evidence which holds that if one party opens a door, the opposing party may then push the door wide open. If a party has a right to keep a door closed, and objects to opening it, then it must be kept entirely closed. For, if the party having the right to keep it closed opens it cautiously, intentionally, or in any way, even very slightly, that slight opening forfeits the right of closing, and the other party can then open the door widely and bring in a line of evidence which otherwise might be excluded. This is the rule, and it is manifestly a just one.

The occurrences we witness in the court-room are as follows: "If the court please," says Mr. Tremain, "we come now to the direct question whether the accused can avail himself of this line of evidence. My associate, Mr. Hadley, at the very moment the attorney-general

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asked the question, called my attention to it. And that question was certainly answered. The evidence was called out on the part of the people. They have opened the door. They have let in this line of our defense; and I believe it is in the furtherance of justice that they have done so. We are entirely sure that the evidence was given as I have stated."

The Attorney-general: "Your honor, it is simply impossible that I could have asked such a question, or have permitted such an answer to be given."

Mr. Tremain: "But we are certain; we have not the slightest doubt about it. We are willing to make affidavits or do anything that may be required of us in proof of our assertion. We have clear and positive recollection that this evidence (in a few words) was called out on the part of the people."

The Court (after searching): "The evidence does not seem to be on my min-

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utes. However, it is not possible for me to follow all matters which do not appear to be at all material when called out. I think this could not have been dwelt upon."

Mr. Tremain : "No, your honor, it was not ; but the evidence was given. The people have opened the door. We insist upon our technical right."

The Attorney-general : "Is there not another line of defense still to be considered ?"

Mr. Tremain : "Yes, your honor ; but we will have to come back to this again."

The Court : "Put in the evidence on the other branch of the case, and in the mean time I will think of this."

Mr. Tremain : "Very well, your honor, we will take up another line of evidence, but must insist upon our rights in this matter when we reach it again."

An hour later.

Mr. Tremain : "That is all ; and now

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we come again to that question as to the admissibility of the line of evidence for which the door was opened to us by the answer called out on the part of the people. Both Mr. Hadley and myself assert most solemnly that we have positive recollection that the question was asked and answered. Can it be supposed that we are mistaken? Our attention was drawn to the matter at the very time it occurred. The great importance of the fact that the door was opened led my associate to notice the few words that were spoken, just at the time. I also was led to notice them."

The Attorney-general: "Your honor, it is impossible — wholly impossible. We remember no such evidence, and your honor's minutes prove that nothing of the kind occurred. Is not the record of the court conclusive?"

Mr. Tremain: "But, your honor, is our positive knowledge and solemn de-

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claration to be treated as nothing? That one man or ten men failed to see or hear and remember is not proof as against positive knowledge. The negative evidence of those who did not see does not disprove the positive evidence of those who did."

The contest raged for half an hour. In the mean time, who is that quiet person seated at the long table, on the opposite side from the counsel, and yet near to the witness? He has been there during the circuit, writing, but wholly ignored by the court and counsel. We recognize in him the reporter who was so sharply treated by the lawyers in their offices. It must be that the judge has kindly allowed the reporter a seat within the bar. Let us look over his shoulder and see the carefully written pages. Every word, every comma, of all that has been done, has been recorded. The old, slow method, in which the court and attorneys have kept their minutes, has given the short-

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hand man time for this. While the others have been scratching and perspiring (and keeping the witnesses down to half-speed) to get the substance, the reporter has leisurely written all the words of every question and every answer in exact and (to him) very legible shorthand characters. We see also that he has now written in his best penmanship a copy of a passage of about sixty words taken from his notes. We see the sheet on which the copy is made lying on the table beside his note-book. We read the copy and discover that it is the very passage about which the counsel are now raging.

Why does the reporter remain quietly in his seat with no offer to aid the contending parties? It is because they virtually turned him out of their offices, and have not spoken to or looked toward him during the progress of the trial; and his face now has perplexity written over it. Shall he or shall he not venture

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to aid? Will his offering be spurned or accepted? As the minutes go by, the battle continues between counsel, and the conflict waxes warmer in the mind of the reporter. Has he a right to remain silent? He glances at the anxious face of the citizen on trial; how dreadful the accusation against him!

The reporter finally decides that he will make another copy (so as to avoid the interlineation of one word which appears as an interlineation in the first copy) and place this entirely perfect copy upon the desk before the court. He makes the second copy in his clearest penmanship. Then comes the critical moment. He rises, walks around the end of the table, takes four steps to the bench where the august court is seated, places his paper on the desk before the court and then, with his pulses throbbing, turns and quietly resumes his seat by the long table.

In a moment the attorney for the de-

## THE COURTS

fense, Mr. Hadley, divines the meaning of the reporter's movement. And in another he rises, walks around the end of the table, and stands meekly at the reporter's elbow, while he whispers a most humble request that the reporter will give him a copy of the paper he has just placed before the court. The first copy, with the word interlined, is fortunately ready, and is graciously handed to Mr. Hadley. With an eager glance at the paper and a sudden flush upon his face, the attorney steps quickly to his counsel (Mr. Tremain) who has the floor at the moment. Mr. Tremain pauses in his argument, grasps the copy, and, looking at it, breaks out triumphantly into praises of stenography.

"And besides all this which I have urged, your honor," he says, "there is in attendance here a stenographer, who takes every question and answer, every word uttered by the court, counsel, and

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witnesses in the examinations of this important trial. How could anything be more exact or satisfactory than this?" And then he reads the evidence which the reporter has furnished.

"Yes; I see," says the judge, studying his copy, and with relief and satisfaction written all over his countenance.

The memory of the court and the lawyers is refreshed. The judge, the attorney-general, and all agree that the record is most strictly accurate and complete. The new line of defense comes in and changes the aspect of the case. Two hours from the time the reporter makes his venture the attorney-general, in lofty and dignified language, concedes that the accused has made out a good case of self-defense, and the trial for homicide ends with an honorable acquittal; there is hand-shaking and rejoicing, and the accused goes his way to his home and to freedom.

But how about the stenographer? He

## THE COURTS

has succeeded only too well for his own peace and rest. From that day and hour he found it impossible to do the work forced upon his attention. It was very difficult to get stenographic aid. The reporter transferred to other workers his legislative and newspaper engagements, and devoted his energies to the new field. The experience of the reporter may have been paralleled in other localities. It took time for new men to become qualified to do this new kind of expert work, but more than a dozen years before the close of the nineteenth century the advance had been pretty generally made. The note-books of the reporters had descended upon the court-rooms and the scene was changed. The pens had been laid aside. The examination of witnesses moved smoothly on, no longer checked or broken by those painful delays which had been required when the court and the lawyers were writing the evidence. The tedious-

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ness had departed ; the court-room had become a pleasant place. It was often a treat to hear the quick and sprightly talk occurring between an examining counsel and the witness. And the judges, clothed with a new dignity, sitting bravely upright and in their right minds, had become the special friends of the stenographers.

Remembering how many courts there are in the counties of the States of the Union ; how great the forest of pens formerly waving in slow anguish in these courts, but now laid low ; how pleasant the change from tedious delay to brisk activity over this wide area ; and how great a saving of time and money has been effected, one gets a glimpse of the advance that has been made in this industrial department of the domain of letters.

Here again, I turn somewhat abruptly, to give the concluding phase of the Pathfinder's experience.

## STORY-WRITING

### STORY-WRITING

The path-seeking reporter, who had found his way into the legislatures of the various States, the newspapers and the courts, had not been able to gain an entrance into the enchanted realm of literature. From a date before his college days he had been dreaming and trying. In the log-cabin by the saw-mill, in the Adirondack wilderness where he had labored, he had read the writings of Lowell, of Longfellow, of Emerson, and various authors who were then gaining admirers and laying the foundations of American literature.

The literary impulse which came to the youth at that time grew with his growth, and did not in after years wholly perish. But he came to see that neither shorthand nor college learning, nor years of trying and dreaming and scheming, would give to him the power of literary achievement.

## THE STORY OF A PATHFINDER

He could write editorials, he could be, and often was, a newspaper correspondent, and his years of reporting in various legislatures and the courts, had given him some knowledge of the world; but all this counted as nothing in the field of original literature,—that strange, beautiful, unknowable world of inspiration and art. His essays (sent to the greatest literary magazine in America) always came back. He tried the venture again and again, as the rolling years went round, but always with the same negative result. The door of the great temple that he sought to enter was closed against him. He was settling down to the conviction that the literary life he so longed for was denied him. It seemed that his nature was not endowed in any literary direction. He was planning how best to devote all his energies and time to the reporting industries which he had discovered and was cultivating.

## STORY-WRITING

But there came a day ! It was to him the greatest day he had ever known, because it revealed him to himself. It was a December day (1871) of beautiful winter sunshine, just ten years from that December when he had come alone, and a stranger, to the city. Now he had his position as court reporter, and his little office on a handsome street, and many hopes and joys were gathering around his heart.

Memory pictures the scene and the events of that day. The reporter was alone, and found it quiet, and the air still, in his little back office up one flight of stairs from the city sidewalk. It was in the time of recess in the courts. He was looking forward with good cheer to a week of leisure. The winter sunshine, coming through his one large window, fell in a great yellow square upon the bare, wooden floor. The wood-fire, which with his country habits he had all the while

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clung to, was purring gently in the little box-stove. He had been reading a certain famous essay upon the philosophy of style. He thought he saw a new element which might aid him in his writing. In his days of leisure it was his custom to write letters to the newspapers. They were always glad to get correspondence from the State Capital. And now he questioned whether he could use his new idea in writing the letter he was considering. But no, that was not a good method of trying it. A story would give the right chance to test the question. But could he write a good story? He had seen something about sketches or stories of the wild West, then recently written by a young man who hailed from California, and he had read one or more of them. Could he himself do such a thing? His newspaper experience gave him slight chance to know. He drew his chair to the table and took up his pen. A scene in

## STORY-WRITING

the Adirondack forest, a transaction in which he had taken some part in his days of lumbering and teaching, came vividly to his imagination. He proceeded to write a few words of description of a place in the great wilderness. Soon he paused and gazed at vacancy. All the nameless charms, and even the balsamic odors of the forest, seemed to be present. He was absorbed in this new and strange experience. As the hours went by he sat gazing in delight and wonder. Why had he not tried this work before? Why had he not sought to picture in stories (not essays) the wilderness, which had been the joy and dream of his youthful life? He did not write much. He was intently watching the vision. To move a hand seemed to disturb the picture that was unfolding itself before him. He saw that items which nature had left out presented themselves, and completed and made perfect the drama. As he was gazing and

## THE STORY OF A PATHFINDER

wondering, he forgot his one o'clock dinner; he forgot to go for his afternoon mail; he forgot all things; and it seemed a brief hour only until the light in his window began to darken, and he discovered with surprise that the day had departed. He compelled himself to go to supper, but resumed his work immediately afterward. The vision kindly held, and soon began to shape itself into language. He had thus far been gazing and had written very little. But now words began to appear, and some became protuberant, and phrases came and were imperative in their demand to be heard. The new author, the reporter, resolutely took himself away from the work that had so strangely fascinated him, as the bell tolled midnight in the Cathedral tower. As he locked his office door and walked up the street to his lodgings, he wondered whether he would sleep. He slept as only a trained reporter with good nerves and a peace-

## STORY-WRITING

ful heart can sleep under exciting circumstances.

When the reporter awoke next morning, there was the vision immediately present, and with those protuberant and emphatic words and imperative phrases sticking out. Then followed another day of dreaming and writing. And at ten o'clock in the evening of that second day, as the reporter well remembers, that first roughly-written manuscript lay before him completed, a tumbled bundle of inky papers on his table.

He could rest now. The vision might fade, but he had it on paper, every word accurately recorded. There was no such thing as revision. For some reason, which was never explained, he could not change a word or syllable or even a comma of that first revelation that came to him. He was new and unconscious in the business.

The reporter having produced a little

## THE STORY OF A PATHFINDER

work of art that was destined to change his place in life, had no clear knowledge of what he had accomplished. He smiled at his own thoughts and wondered whether the peculiar delight he had experienced indicated anything as to failure or success. Was the story he had written of some value or was it folly?

Two days after he had completed the story, he sat in his office with a clean and perfect copy before him inclosed and ready for the mail. Where should he send "the thing" in order to learn what the editors would say of it? He sat for a time balancing the pen in his hand before he addressed the package. Should he send the story to the newspaper for which he was writing letters? The thought of the great literary magazine where he had failed so often with his essays came into his mind. He had given up hoping in regard to the magazine years before. But it might be no harm

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to try again, — to test this strange new thing that puzzled him. He had nothing to lose by the venture, although he knew that he could not gain. His pen moved, and half unconscious of any choice, he directed his story to the great monthly. And then he went out and mailed it, — mailed it to the pages where Emerson was then writing, and Whittier and the Autocrat and Mrs. Stowe, — mailed it to the greatest literary magazine in America, or for that matter in all the world, — mailed it and then turned back to his obscure little office, sincerely feeling and believing that he might just as well have fired that strange manuscript out of a big gun toward the stars.

It would be folly to try to describe the internal experiences of the reporter after he had sent his manuscript. He assured himself a dozen times the first day (and on various days afterward, when he was not absorbed with court anxieties) that

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he had no hope, not a grain of expectation in regard to his venture. There was long delay and then there came a morning! It was a glad morning that could never come in all its fullness again. There appeared in the reporter's mail a little white publishers' envelope, and he pulled it open in the post-office, and read it and stood bewildered, thrilled, astonished (almost aghast), in the presence of an acceptance by the great magazine! He said to himself that it could not be true. He read the letter again and there was the clear assurance that he was wanted, and would have a place in the world of letters. He had seen enough of life to know what this meant. He remembered his years of seeking and waiting, and hiding his hope even from himself. He realized that now the great event had occurred. The rise in life had come: he had found the path and was taking the step upward. He had, all unwittingly,

## STORY-WRITING

discovered his endowment, his little genius or talent, or his something, whatever it was, in the direction of story-writing. And this was leading him on to a platform, higher than he had expected ever to occupy. He left the post-office in that peculiar frame of mind which has been described as causing the individual affected by it to seem to himself to be walking upon the atmosphere. And for days as he toiled, this lingered with him. He fed secretly upon the thought of what had occurred, and was profoundly conscious of the upward step he was taking.

I suppose there may be those who will smile at this joy, this dream of the reporter; but those who have toiled long and patiently for success of any kind, and then suddenly and unexpectedly succeeded, will not smile. The heart recognizes such long waiting and such a success as serious, and as justly calling for respect and sympathy.

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There came one other day that made a permanent picture in the reporter's memory: it was the day when his story appeared. He had not expected it for months to come. He came upon it in a public reading-room, — his own name on the cover of the magazine, and just above it the name of John G. Whittier. As the reporter turned the leaves and read, his story seemed far away, as if written by another person. He was surprised and deeply moved by its pathos and power. He went out from the reading-room into a new world, — a world of congratulations and kindly greetings, a world that gave him honor and respect, such as he had not known before. For in that day, when authors were so great, to be one of the few admitted to the famous pages where Longfellow, Whittier, Emerson, and Mrs. Stowe were writing, was regarded as, in various ways, better than to be a king.

## STORY-WRITING

The reporter found, as time went on, that he had not miscalculated the results that would flow from his discovery of himself. A goodly list of his spontaneous stories soon followed the first one in the same high place; and the reporter learned the pleasant road to Boston, and trod the pathway to the famous banquets to meet the great names he (and all America) had so long honored in the realm of letters. His own quiet place in literature was the ornament, the gilding, the brightness of his many years in the courts, and his life of arduous labor.

Here, Lady Mary, I reach the close of this Pathfinding story. But I add in the following pages some of those tales which the Pathfinder has written. And in review I may say, that the writing of them has been the most delightful pursuit he has known, and has brought the rewards he most values.



A LOVER'S CONSCIENCE



## A LOVER'S CONSCIENCE

SHE was urging upon him the point that life is but a dream, and that all things should be done with reference to the great hereafter. She was eighteen, and he was twenty-two. They were far out on Lake Champlain, skating. All sounds seemed to have died on the distant shore.

They paused, hand in hand, and looked around them. It was a still, February day, full of beautiful winter sunshine. Here and there, far off on the snowy floor of the wide valley, they saw black specks, which they knew to be teams, crawling like insects over the white waste. On the western side, mountains rose in precipitous grandeur, their dark, spruce-covered summits cutting a jagged line against the pale-blue steel of the northern

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sky. On the eastern shore was Vermont ; and they saw in that direction, by the brink of the lake, Burlington, the city of the valley, so diminished by distance that its wharves and houses and leafless trees could scarcely be distinguished. They saw more plainly the smoke of its chimneys staining the sky with a blur of amber. There were the homes from which they had ventured out seven miles upon the ice, regardless of cracks and air-holes. The glide had been rapid and exhilarating. The pause enabled them to realize how still it was so far away from human habitations, and how impressive the prospect.

“ But we do know perfectly well, Malcolm,” said Miss Warrington, resuming their conversation on the everlasting subject, “ that this outward existence is merely a fleeting shadow, and has not the least real substance.”

Mr. Malcolm Bruce was aware of this

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fact. He had supposed otherwise in his natural state, while he remained a boy at home on a stump farm in Canada ; but on coming to college, at Burlington, he had found out how it was. His interest in the matter had not been very great, however, until he made the acquaintance of Anna Warrington. It might not have been engrossing even then if he had not fallen in love with the young lady. But his ardent feeling and her spirituality and acuteness led him on. She saw clearly that life is an incident only, a mere step, a trifle in the endless march of eternity ; and she made Malcolm see it also. Out there on the ice, that February day, their minds were full of these "inspirations."

Miss Warrington was not a student in the college (for this was before women were admitted to the University of Vermont), but she ought to have been ; it would have saved her from grievous mistakes. As it was, she merely "investi-

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gated," and delighted in the philosophical studies as she misunderstood them. She was quite diligent in reading profound works. She was not accurate, because she was without suitable training; but she was very enthusiastic. It was her notion to carry out in practice some of those valuable abstract conclusions which in education do not seem to form the common mind. She thought it consistent even then (before the subject had been treated by novelists) to stand guard over the conjugal rights of dead people. And as matters turned out with Anna Warrington, there need be no hesitation in saying that she was sincere in her transcendental view that, with philosophical people, marriage ought to be, and is, an institution not so much for time as for eternity. It was the union of souls, the blending of kindred spirits, that she commended.

If nature ever smiles, as frequently asserted, she probably did so on this oc-

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casion, when this highly sensitive young woman pleaded with her companion, and actually shed tears as she pictured the grief of a wife departed looking from the realms above upon her partner's second venture in the matrimonial market.

To this situation had Miss Anna been brought by shallow learning, unbridled romance, and that kind of crisis in her experience usually called a disappointment.

Malcolm knew nothing about her sentimental misfortune. It was not known to anybody in Burlington except two excellent unmarried women, who were distant relatives of Anna's, and at whose home she was visiting. She was a stranger in the verdant little city, and her residence (except that she was from the South) was unknown. But her interest in the peculiar philosophy of the college and in poetry and metaphysics was so rank a growth that various people besides Malcolm were aware of it.

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It is not the plan of this narrative to leave the pair on the ice any longer. They reached home at four o'clock in the afternoon, with good appetites, no marks on their faces, and Anna's small white handkerchief showing evidence of having been vigorously used. Malcolm Bruce must have been dimly conscious even then of the morbid phase of the situation, for he was a sensible youth, but he was just out of the Canada woods. It was a prodigious and almost incredible thing to him that a cultivated and elegant young lady could be so fond of Malcolm Bruce. He quaked with reverence and honest fear in the presence of such superior feminine attractions. It is clear that the times also were somewhat to blame. Those were the days before the Civil War, when the last hours of weakly female children were celebrated in song throughout the Union. The farewell words and the little green grave

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were known to millions. It was a luxurious period, when in America everybody's muscles felt the softening influence of a century of peace. Tears were delicious, and the dusty road of life was sprinkled with them then far more than it is now. Doubtless Bruce felt this general influence strongly. The peculiarities of the place also aided his infatuation. Taking into account the beautiful and peculiar philosophy taught by the college and its accompanying theory of fine art, it may safely be affirmed that the locality was extremely romantic. Solemn mountains stand in great magnificence around this lovely vale, where the sublimest truths were promulgated. The future state was made very near and palpable to the students. There might be some doubt about the absolute reality of the present world, but no Burlington student in his senses ever had any question about the certainty of the world to come.

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It was not often that shallow students or sympathizers were misled to the extent apparent in Anna Warrington. The philosophic dream was more likely to be truthful, and to come to strong men. It began to show itself usually in thoughtfulness and a fondness for the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and resulted in landing the man in Andover Theological Seminary, where he would surpass his fellow-students in deep knowledge and profound thinking. Bruce saw what was to him the majesty of the great world and the dignity of unsurpassed learning in this sequestered valley, where wild-flowers were the chief ornament, and not man, but nature, reigned supreme. It was in his freshman year that he bowed down and worshiped the bedazzled and bedazzling Anna Warrington. He was then at his weakest in his conflict with the world.

But there was a second step in this mat-

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ter, which I would endeavor to account for if it were not too preposterous. As it is I shall merely state the facts, and leave the case on its merits. Anna Warrington and Malcolm Bruce, in making their little preparatory arrangements for living and dying and the hereafter, including, of course, the slight circumstance usually known as marriage, bargained both for time and eternity! The compact contained all the particulars. Anna put them in as if per schedule A and B, and Bruce, in transports of love and enchantment, assented. It was, indeed, and aside from all levity, a very tender scene when these two, so young and sincere, pledged themselves to each other *forever*, specifically setting aside the decree of the skeleton king, whose will terminates all engagements, and especially marriage-contracts, and whose power to part the nearest and dearest is verbally conceded in the wedding ceremony.

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There is a natural grotto in the bluff of Red-rocks, which overhangs the lake, a mile south of Burlington. It was in this wild and hidden retreat, amid the soft airs and under hearing of the birds of June, that the lovers prayed, and vowed, and promised. The blue waves saw and clapped their hands; but there was no voice from the majestic mountains. There was probably an impression on the part of the everlasting hills that these two young persons did not know what they were talking about. But they had no uncertainty.

They were to live for each other, whether married or single. No misunderstanding that could come between them and no absence or desertion was to serve as a pretext or excuse for dissolving this union. It was to be above all the accidents of time, and in its nature absolute. If one died, the other was to wait until they should be united beyond the

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grave. In the mean time the deceased was to watch over the survivor, and endeavor to make his or her spiritual presence felt by the mourner. That communication under such circumstances might be impossible was conceded, yet an effort in that direction was thought advisable, and was made part of the mutual undertaking. If they were in any way separated in this life, each was to live in singleness, looking forward to a meeting here or in the life to come.

Anna Warrington sang divinely, and one of her chosen hymns, as she rendered it, seemed to all of us to float along the very edge of the spirit-world. That weird melody haunted Malcolm and bewitched him. It was always clear to me that this poor girl, with such a haunting voice and dark, hungry, and unearthly eyes, was suffering from a defeat which was eating her heart out, and I have so treated the matter in these pages. But

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there were those who believed differently. They could find deceit in that sad and lovely face, and deliberate design in the treatment she gave her college lover.

The day after the scene in the grotto, an event occurred without which it would not have been worth while to write this history. That event was nothing less than the sudden and unexplained disappearance of Miss Warrington from Burlington. It was not alarming because she merely "went somewhere." But it was a trying thing for Bruce to be treated in this curt way, even upon the most liberal hypothesis in regard to the unimportance of mundane affairs. If she had been coming back sometime, or if he could have found out where she had gone, he might, perhaps, have borne it better; but in the absence of the least scintilla of information, the situation, as time went by, grew discouraging.

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It might have been stated early in this record, had that vulgar fact been important, that Malcolm took his meals at the very house where Anna, for the time being, was on a visit. That was, indeed, the secret of their acquaintance and intimacy. Those two excellent single women, who had Anna with them and took Malcolm to board, were the best friends the student had in the place, and among the best women in Burlington. Whether they saw fit to board a freshman for a while on Anna's account is a matter of speculation. Certain it is that they never boarded any one else, and Malcolm was politely "excused" within two weeks after Anna's disappearance.

The point of the matter was that Malcolm could get no response from these friends, when he hinted, by his inquiries, his desire to know something about Miss Warrington. Not a ray of light could be seen in the mystery. Miss

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Mary, the elder of the two sisters (for they were sisters), was a large, dashing brunette of forty, fond of art, poetry, and romance. She evidently sympathized with Malcolm, but she said nothing. Her quiet sister, Lucy, was equally silent upon the subject. The young Scotchman took to heart the treatment he received. He was surprised in his room in college, on several occasions, sitting in silent meditation, bathed in tears.

For three years (during the remainder of the course) the student from Canada continued faithfully at his post. His affair with the girl at the corner house and her mysterious disappearance were dimly known. But he was too honest and manly to be laughed at. That he was in some sense widowed was recognized, but the agreement that had snared his honest soul was not suspected at that time. His occasional melancholy and fits of moodiness were accounted for by the

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disappointment which so earnest a nature must have suffered in losing a sweetheart. But he seemed to recover by degrees. It was, indeed, impossible that he should fail to see, as he reached the dignity of a senior, and read for himself, in the regular course, those subjects which had bedazzled Miss Warrington, how absurd her talk had been. It were vain to deny the resistless charm there is in young womanhood though it may be topped by a silly brain, and it must be conceded that love is mighty in a young man; but there is reason to believe that Malcolm's strong Scotch sense conquered these forces. Those fatuous tears over whom it might concern were a little too much even for the stomach of romance. I speak of it as of an ostrich. There was, however, another power which held him. He was, without reserve or mitigation, a Scotchman with a conscience! No alarm will be created by this announcement,

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except upon the part of those who have in some emergency encountered such an obstacle. It is the only thing, so far as ascertained, that can finally prevent the course of true love, or deny the right of way to a constructing railroad corporation. Unknown to all but themselves, this girl had bound this man down with the strong cords which his honesty and sincerity furnished. I believe that in secret he writhed on his rock of suffering. Malcolm would not look at other women, for he was a Bruce, and had made his choice in life. It was a pitiable choice, and he came to know it; but it was a transaction, and unless changed he would abide by it. Knowing him well, I have not a doubt that he schooled himself to love the memory and honor the thought of the girl whose vapid sentimentality, emptiness, and unfairness he could not help seeing. Had Malcolm's engagement been known, he

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might have been released in some way. Miss Mary might perhaps have managed it. But Bruce was too proud and sensitive to blurt out his private affairs to anybody; and besides that, his arrangement with Anna was not a mere engagement of marriage. He had really nothing to complain of under its terms and assumptions, for what was life, or indeed death for that matter, in such an agreement? A few years were of no account, and a separation for a century was not worth mentioning. In his anxiety to do "the right thing," he undertook to jot down some of these ridiculous postulates, and so much of the promises he had made as he could remember; but there was a queerness about it all that puzzled him, and made him blush to think he could have been so unwise.

Mr. Bruce graduated with honors, and seemed to have overcome his depression. It was a very bright day for the Canada

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boy, when, as the fruit of his own industry, he found himself among the first of a college class, his education finished and paid for.

Five years after commencement, I was surprised to learn in Albany that Malcolm Bruce, my college friend, had secured a place in the city, as a clerk in one of the State departments. I had not thought him the kind of man to have an influence in politics or settle down to a clerkship. But I was glad to see him. It was by chance that we met, as he was getting off the cars down by the Hudson River. He was new to the city. I walked with him up State Street to the marble building on Capitol Hill where the offices were. He was courteously received, and his desk assigned him. Then I prevailed upon him to go to dinner with me.

Halfway down the hill, crossing State Street at right angles, was Pearl Street, at

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that date shaded with trees and bordered with handsome dwellings. In Pearl, north of State, a few rods from the corner, was the house of my landlady, Mrs. Tibbles. Here we dined and here Malcolm finally settled down with me as a fellow-boarder.

There were three other boarders, or as Mrs. Tibbles preferred to phrase it, members of the family. There was first, Mr. Mull, with very short gray hair, a city face, and a bold, mocking laugh; then Mr. Gilman, a newspaper man, with a fresh complexion, rich brown mustache, and a breezy manner that was like the prairies from which he came; and lastly there was pretty, girlish Miss Newby, who had just come to Albany, and was engaged as teacher in a private school.

No sharp practice is intended by bringing in that item of inflammatory material so quietly in the last sentence. The entire matter is above-board. Miss Helen Newby *was* about to influence the man

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Malcolm. But what is denied most unqualifiedly and emphatically is that either Helen or Malcolm suspected any such thing or contrived it, or did anything designedly which led in that direction. It has already appeared that Malcolm was appropriated; and he had not been released from his engagement. From what I learned subsequently, I know that when he first met Miss Newby he was of the opinion that after all a single life is not the greatest misfortune in the world, and that so long as he knew nothing about Anna Warrington, the right way was to avoid all other feminine blandishments.

As to Miss Newby, she was a new-blown rose, from a country pastor's family, as frank, earnest, and simple-hearted as the youngest in her school. It was delightful to see such an one with her colored ribbons, her blue eyes, rustic health, and charming fearlessness, in a hackneyed, dusty, city boarding-house.

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The sweet light of home, so lost to the rest of the household, shone on her face. She blessed us by her presence. It was noticeable that all the company at the table, including Mrs. Tibbles, who despised lady-boarders in general, went down in spiritual self-abasement before this genuine bit of lovely womanhood. Mr. Mull, who was a lobbyist half the year and at work mysteriously the other half, ceased to scoff when the Vermont rose was present.

But the one she "took to" was Malcolm. It was inevitable. There was a long delay in bringing the fact out, however, for they were as shy as cat and dog all the first summer. But when winter came there was a disposition among us to be more civilized. This was encouraged by Mrs. Tibbles, who invited us all into the parlor, evenings, to play chess or read aloud, or sing, or do anything that was becoming to a well-ordered family. Mull

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scouted the idea, and went out as usual for the evening, but the rest of us soon formed a little reading-circle.

There seems to be no reason why a statement of the result should be expanded by introducing those particulars which picture the growth of a romantic attachment. It is better merely to announce that it was a serious case. The parties were probably not aware of it for some time. As their mutual shyness wore off, it was as though they, in their innocence, supposed the dangerous time had gone by. It was the reading which charmed the rest of us, in which they also appeared to be interested. Malcolm was the principal reader. His nature was responsive to the author's meaning, and he expressed feelings in his voice. While he gave us very much of Scott and Burns, he also read with great success English and American authors. His greatest triumph was on Christmas Eve, when he rendered the

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famous Carol by Charles Dickens. Good Mrs. Tibbles laughed and cried over the story until she was almost exhausted, and Miss Newby's face glowed with a wonderful radiance. There was apparently, and I think in reality, no immediate danger in these readings, of a fire being kindled, if it had not been for what followed. There was an event outside which induced the parties to take an adventurous step.

The war of the rebellion had been fought since our college days. Indeed, Malcolm went from college almost directly to the field, and he had come to Albany from the disbanding army. And now the country was turning back to the arts of peace. It was then that the news reached our little reading-circle in the parlor that the author of the immortal Carol, the greatest reader in the world, was coming to the city of Albany. It caused an excitement which took up the

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entire evening, and produced an exhilaration which lasted several days. When the time arrived, and there was that frantic crowding for tickets, the story of which is so well known, Malcolm triumphed. He secured two excellent places, side by side, for both evenings. In the flush of his victory, he did not hesitate to offer his extra place to Miss Newby. It would have been impossible for him to do her a greater kindness. We all felt that it was a most graceful and gallant act on Malcolm's part; for to see Charles Dickens was the event of a lifetime. None of us were willing that our little rose from Vermont should miss such an opportunity; and all the household were grateful to Mr. Bruce for inviting her.

Among those who listened to the great author when he came, with a degree of rapture which took away their ability to judge of him critically, were Malcolm and Helen. All might still have been safe

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if the matter had ended even here. But it did not. Tweddle Hall, at the corner of Pearl and State Streets, where Charles Dickens read and concerts and lectures were frequent, was near-by and temptingly convenient. It was the main auditorium of the city. Every morning and evening Malcolm passed it and Helen passed it, he going to his office and she to her place in the school. It was not a dozen rods, on the broad sidewalk, from Mrs. Tibbles's front door. How could these two friends, of rustic habits and education, help passing along the walk together; and now that the ice was broken, how could they avoid sometimes attending the lecture or the concert at the hall in company? They did not avoid it, and they had not a thought, apparently, that they were noticed. Doubtless the city seemed to them a wilderness of human beings, who did not regard them as they passed by. But their liking for

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each other was so frank, so manifest, so pretty as an idyllic picture, and evidently so unsuspected by themselves, that it soon provoked comment. Then followed a step on the part of these two friends which settled the question in the minds of the public. They began to walk to church together, and took seats side by side wherever they attended religious service. If they thought of it at all, as they wandered away toward some sacred edifice, they must have fancied they were like the babes in the woods, unobserved and uncared for. But the world understood things differently.

“Bruce is a lucky fellow,” said Gilman in my room. “When is the wedding?”

Mull was there, but Gilman appealed to me as the college friend of Bruce. I did not reply.

“I said it was ‘a go’ the first time I saw them together,” proclaimed Mull.

“I have heard a good deal said about

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it," remarked Gilman, with hesitation, glancing at Mull.

"The engagement ought to have been announced before this," declared Mull, with a trace of severity in his manner. And he added, "I am not sure but she is too good for him."

No more was said on the subject at that time, but it was not long before hints came to me from other parties, and Mrs. Tibbles also sought for an interview in regard to the pair. She said that Helen, poor child, "had no idea." Finally I spoke to Malcolm, telling him some of the things I had heard. He was at first astonished, then indignant; and then, as I pressed him with the facts and explained the views and requirements of city society, he became alarmed, and was stricken with the fear that he had injured his dearest friend. Really, he had done so, and I could not deny it. The friends of Helen at the school were chief among

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those who had spoken with anxiety of her remarkable acquaintance with the department clerk.

“If she is not married soon, we shall not know what to think,” had been the comment of one of them.

Malcolm's eager inquiries drew out from me the whole story, which reduced him to a condition of grief and consternation. Then I pointed out that bright and happy way by which all could be made right. Assuring him that Helen would accept him (if indeed she had not done so), I urged the importance of announcing the engagement immediately, or fixing the wedding-day.

My friend's countenance fell. We were in his room. He sat down upon a chair, rested his elbows on his knees, braced up his chin with his hands, and gazed long and abstractedly at a figure on the carpet between the toes of his boots.

As the result of this meditation, he

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confessed to me that an engagement made in our college days was the only thing that prevented him from seeking the hand of Helen in marriage. I knew the affair he referred to, and expressed surprise. We had not supposed at the time that it was more than a passing romance between him and Anna Warrington. But he now assured me, with a perplexed face, that he had made a solemn promise which rested upon his conscience, and which, if he disregarded it, would make him a guilty wretch in this world and a poor lost soul in the world to come. This last despairing conclusion was uttered in a nervous, crying tone, like that of a child in abject fear. Yet I could see that it was genuine. It occurred to me that he must have learned the form and intonation from his mother.

I sat down beside him, and drew out the facts of his acquaintance with Miss Warrington. It was my impression that

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a contract of the kind he described, made so long ago, and not entered upon in any way, could not be of any binding force in the court of conscience or honor. I urged him to consider how absurd it was to suppose that he could bargain for the next world. He conceded the point, but claimed that the bargain for this life could not be invalidated by any such specious considerations. He thought it was an agreement which held both parties to celibacy, marriage with each other, or widowhood. When I pointed out that he could not trade away the highest uses of life in a manner which thus destroyed them, he said that monks and nuns did it, and he and Anna Warrington had a right to. When I suggested that as a transaction in the eye of the law, the entire contract must be taken, and that when so taken it was too ridiculous to stand for a moment, he thought that no excuse.

It was when I appealed to him in be-

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half of Helen Newby that he first felt my words. Then he shrank as if I had struck him. I pitied the man as I left him, bewailing his sorrows in a fashion I had seen in him once or twice in college, his hands over his face, scarcely concealing his tears. But one concession had been granted by him : he was willing that I should explain his good intentions to others, and the peculiar circumstances of his previous engagement, as his excuse for the course now pursued. It was a poor apology, but there was no other.

Matters progressed rapidly. I tried to say very little, but Mrs. Tibbles had a talk with Malcolm, and in various ways the truth became known. The Vermont temper was quick and active. The rose would not be talked about, quietly. It was a word and a flash, apparently. There was the rumble of getting a trunk through the hall, and then a hack came to the door in the evening, and she had gone

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home for her vacation, a week before the school term ended. There was no good-bye.

Next morning, at breakfast, Mrs. Tibbles tried to allude to the departure politely, as if it had not been abrupt ; but there was constraint about the talk. The tide turned very strongly against Malcolm.

“Do you mean to say, Mr. Bruce,” asked Gilman, when we were grouped in my room, “that it is the right thing to step out of this, because of some nonsense nine years ago with another girl?”

“But, Mr. Gilman, Mr. Gilman, it was a sacred promise,” protested Malcolm.

“Do you mean to say,” blazed Gilman, lifting his six feet to an accusing attitude, and shaking his index finger at the Scotchman, “that you have a right to treat Miss Newby in this way on such a plea as that? If you do, you are not the man I took you for.”

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"But it was a sacred promise forever," insisted Malcolm.

"Gander-headed fool!" drawled Mull, gazing at Bruce scornfully.

For a moment I thought the Scotchman would seize him, but he did not. He rose, whether cowed or in a rage I could hardly tell, and left the room. I felt somewhat responsible for my college friend, and tried to explain that his romance at the university had been quite serious.

"His what?" questioned Mull.

"His romance, — romance," I replied, doubling the word to make it clear.

"Yes, yes, — certainly," commented Mull dryly and with a dubious air, as if the word were rather new to him. "I say, Gilman, such a man ought to be punished. I am willing to help, if you say so."

But Gilman counseled moderation, remarking that Malcolm meant well.

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“That is no excuse,” said Mull. “There is no counting on a man who means well. That is the most dangerous element we have to deal with.”

The incident of Miss Newby's departure drifted on toward forgetfulness, in the rush of city life, but it remained as a mark against Malcolm. He was no longer popular in the house. A kind and degree of condemnation rested upon him that grieved him greatly. He suffered also, acutely, from the loss of his friend Miss Newby. When others began to forget, I could see that he did not. The fact that she did not return to resume her place in the school, when the new term commenced, brought to Malcolm an anguish of spirit. He had counted on some sort of explanation and reconciliation. The entire matter, so trifling in the lives and thought of others, was of vast moment to him. When months passed, and others had become indifferent to the

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transaction, Malcolm was still brooding over the wrong he had done, and the hurt to his friend and his own integrity. He confided the idea to me that it might still be possible to get some word of Anna Warrington, and have such communication with her as would honorably release him, so that he could visit Helen and seek her in marriage. That Anna, if discovered, might not consent, was among his fears. Yet he thought correspondence with the two relatives in Burlington worth trying. It might be possible, he hoped, to gain information from them in regard to the whereabouts of Anna Warrington. With my approval he opened such a correspondence. His inquiries were carefully worded; no special reason for desiring the information was given.

The answer was cautious in the extreme. No hint of the intelligence desired was conveyed. It was apparent to me that there was a something in the case

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which they were guarding. I saw that entire frankness on our part would be required, if any light was to be obtained. But there was an excellent reason why such a method should not be resorted to. It would be an acknowledgment of an obligation where in truth none existed. Such a concession in writing, with its risk of entanglement, would not be prudent. If Malcolm could meet Miss Warrington alone, and free his conscience (or even talk with Miss Mary), I saw no objection to it. But it seemed dangerous, in the darkness surrounding the affair, to put anything on paper. I suggested that he might employ a detective, but he did not.

Thus the matter rested until a year had passed away. Malcolm was in the mean time bearing his loneliness and self-accusation as thousands bear similar burdens along the crowded streets. He was becoming thin, and acquiring that alert,

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worn, and anxious look which characterizes the stereotyped city face.

Early in March, an event occurred which threw a vivid ray across the path of my college friend. In my round of circuits, I was on duty in a curious case in the city of Hudson, thirty miles below Albany. A woman had deceived an entire community. Coming to a little village in Columbia County, she had, though a stranger, obtained money and goods, and lived in a style of unusual magnificence. She was the leader of society, and foremost in all benevolent enterprises. It was merely the confidence game extended so as to include many victims. The woman was without a penny of her own, but borrowed quite large amounts. When after eight months, the town awoke, and each loser confessed how he had been manipulated, an uprising of the people took place, and this "operator" was, after preliminary formalities, brought to trial.

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As the woman was brought from the jail into the court-room, I felt a slight shock of recognition flash through me. It was but a minor event in the midst of more serious matters. Yet it was important, for if I could trust my senses the woman was Anna Warrington. But for a while I suspected that this was merely an instance of similarity in appearance.

The trial began near evening. I had time, after the adjournment, to run up to Albany by a late train, and the next morning I got Malcolm to return with me to Hudson. He was much excited when he learned of my discovery. I placed him in a convenient seat, and we had to wait but a few moments before the defendant came in with the officers. The trial had attracted a crowd. Many stood up to get a view of the woman's face, and among these was Malcolm. I watched him. Suddenly, as she appeared, he became pale, and sat down. Then the

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court reproved the people for rising, and all sank abashed into their seats. Malcolm could now see her clearly, and I noticed that a red tide surged over his features. There was no difficulty about the identity. The maiden name of the defendant was ascertained for me by an attorney. It was Anna Warrington. She was tried as Mrs. Anna Patterson. I learned that she had not regarded her engagement to Malcolm. She had married Mr. Patterson six weeks after she left Burlington. Her husband had died soon after the marriage, and she was now a widow. In a pause that occurred I stepped to Malcolm's seat and told him of these facts.

While I was busy with the trial, Malcolm left the court-room and returned to Albany. But before going he wrote on a scrap of paper the words, "She is the devil's own," and sent it to me by a court officer.

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His judgment was, perhaps, hasty. The woman was finally acquitted, on proof given by friends from her home in New Jersey to the effect that she was unbalanced in mind, and actually believed the statements (concerning her own great wealth and other matters) by which she had so strangely won the confidence of others. Medical experts confirmed this singular view. Some of the spectators did not agree with the verdict of acquittal; but events in the life of the defendant, and especially her exploits in New York City (made known upon the trial), tended to confirm the theory of the experts and relatives.

At the close of the proceedings, I noticed Miss Mary among those who came forward and gathered around the woman just acquitted. It was plain enough now why Anna's friends had been so reticent. Miss Warrington had been no end of trouble from the time of her first disap-

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pointment. With strange inconstancy she would win confidences only to forget them.

"She will melt your very heart and soul with love, pity, and tenderness," was the testimony of a poor milliner, who had loaned Anna all her savings.

Possibly the doctors were in error, but their theory was plausible. They claimed that Anna's brilliancy, pathos, and power of persuasion were the outcome of a slightly disordered intellect and a wounded heart. Having gained the love she craved of one, she would, with the inconstancy of a mind diseased, turn elsewhere and repeat the achievement.

On returning to Albany, I found Malcolm on a high horse. He announced that he had been misled, and repeated that the girl was "the devil's own." He consented to the appropriate modifications, however, when I suggested expressions more in accordance with the verdict. It was a great pleasure to see how he held

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up his head again. His youth came back remarkably in a few days.

“What is he going to do about it?” asked Mull, with a good deal of interest, in my room.

“I understand he is going to Vermont,” suggested Gilman. “Mrs. Tibbles says that Miss Newby is at home, and I saw Bruce ordering some new clothes.”

“What does he want of clothes?” queried Mull. “He ought to get down in the dust and black her shoes.”

Malcolm's joy was of short duration. A sorrow came before he was quite ready to go to Vermont. Its step was quiet, but its power irresistible. There was a tap at the window of the basement dining-room, where Mrs. Tibbles and I were eating breakfast. I never did like that way of taking in letters from the postman, directly off the sidewalk, but it was the custom of the house. The waitress unbolted the sash and slid it down an

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inch, and in came the white envelope, landing on the floor. The letter was picked up, and the postman, whose legs only were visible to our basement view, passed on. The missive proved to be for Mrs. Tibbles, and she opened it. Out came the neat little engraved cards, tied with white satin ribbon, the wedding-reception invitation and all the requirements; and we knew that our Vermont Helen was disposed of to a stranger.

It was a shock to both of us. I was glad that only Mrs. Tibbles and I were present. The little woman began to tremble as she held the smooth, creamy stationery, and thought of what it all meant, and before I knew it she was softly and silently shedding tears. I had not given her credit for so much feeling.

"After all," said Mrs. Tibbles, swallowing her emotion, "Helen could not wait forever. It is thirteen months since she left Albany."

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“Thirteen?” I questioned, not knowing what to say.

“Yes; it will be thirteen months day after to-morrow,” she replied, with the accuracy of a housekeeper who gets her pay. “But I did not think Helen could ever marry anybody but Malcolm. It will be a terrible blow to him.”

I did not wish to see how Malcolm would receive the intelligence; I knew the depth of his feeling and his impulsive nature: therefore I left the breakfast-table rather hastily before he came down, feeling that Mrs. Tibbles was the proper person to do what could be done. That she made it known to him in some way in the course of the day I came to understand before the next morning. Those sounds which came from Malcolm's room were not to be mistaken. His stern, set face, already blue and haggard, startled me when I saw him the second day. He had avoided all of us

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since the cards came, and he avoided me now. I yearned to speak to him, but I knew his pride, and he plainly eluded my footsteps. Mrs. Tibbles came to my room for an interview, and tearfully besought me to do something for Malcolm. She said he would die, that he was dying, and that he might shoot himself, citing several cases just then reported in the New York dailies. I was not alarmed, but I promised to do what I could.

In the afternoon of the third day, Mull came back from New York, and, dropping into my room, asked casually, "How is everything?" He had been gone during the trouble. "Anything about Bruce?" he continued. "I saw him out here by the corner, and he looked as if he had just got up from a fit of sickness."

I told Mull the circumstances. His face showed concern, and he made some inquiries. I stepped downstairs to Mrs.

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Tibbles, and got the envelope and cards to show to him. He looked at them for a moment ; his face began to wrinkle, and he burst into laughter.

I was, naturally, abashed and indignant.

“When did these come?” asked Mull, leering at me.

I told him the day and hour of the arrival.

“Well, they were *mailed* on the 1st,” he said, “although it took them until the next morning to get here.”

“Mailed on the 1st?” I questioned, not seeing the point.

“Yes, the 1st of April,” he replied. “It was fair game. It was All Fools’ Day.”

For a moment I was struck dumb. Could this be true? Then I clutched eagerly at the chance of reprieve for Malcolm which Mull’s words offered.

“Do you know anything about this?” I demanded.

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"I wrote *that*," he replied, turning the envelope over and pointing to the address, which seemed to be in a fine feminine hand.

Mull was "square business" according to his code. I knew his word could be taken in such a matter.

"I had better call Mrs. Tibbles," I suggested.

"Yes, if you wish to," he responded, as if the affair were of no importance.

I stepped down the stairs and called her, and she came to my room. As she entered, I said: "Mr. Mull knows something about these cards."

I saw by the quick flush which spread over her face how sensitive she was upon the subject.

"Mrs. Tibbles," explained the lobbyman, with an air of nonchalance, "I sent these cards, or got them sent, on the 1st of April, and it was just a little joke on Malcolm. He deserved it.

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The boys fixed them for me down at the printing-office, where they print so many. I sent the letter to be mailed in Vermont by a conductor on the railroad. You can see, if you look close, that the postmark is Rutland. It has not been within fifty miles of Helen, so far as I know."

The landlady turned pale as she stood staring at Mr. Mull. For a moment I thought she would fall, and I put out a hand to save her; but the next moment she burst into a fit of uncontrollable weeping, while she exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Mull, Mr. Mull!" and turned and left the room.

A few minutes later Gilman came in, and we discussed the situation.

"It is not *newspaper*, you understand," explained Mull.

"Certainly, I will not mention it," said Gilman; and he added, after a long, expressive, whistling "Whew!"

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the question, "Won't there be a time when Malcolm hears of this!"

There was no opportunity to answer the question, for just then the front door was slammed, and we knew Malcolm had come in for the evening. His heavy footstep did not come up the stairs. There was a little talking in the hall, and then the voices passed into the parlor. In a few moments we heard him raging, and all of us went down. The parlor door was ajar, and I pushed it open. There stood Malcolm, with the light from a window full upon his face.

"I wull, I wull go this very day, Mrs. Tibbles!" he shouted, with the strong Scotch accent which overtook him in his emotional moments. As little Mrs. Tibbles danced around him, wiping her eyes with her apron, and putting her hands on his arm from time to time, trying to persuade him to wait, he waxed more and more earnest and furious. "I ha' been

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a poltroon, a sneaking villain, Mrs. Tibbles," he stormed, "and I canna' sleep intil I make reeparation!"

The strong lashings around his mouth were drawn in furrows, his eyes flashed through tears, his chin trembled, and his whole frame quivered, as he made these charges against himself. Neither he nor the landlady seemed to care anything about the rest of us.

"That is right, Bruce; you talk up like a man, now," said Mull; but no one appeared to hear him.

"Come, come, gentlemen," said Gilman, "we have no business here;" and thereupon we withdrew considerately, closing the parlor door behind us and going upstairs to our rooms.

"Mull, that was pretty rough," said Gilman.

"Yes, he needed it," answered the other.

The next morning when we sat down

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to breakfast, Mr. Mull inquired, "Has Mr. Bruce gone yet?"

The mere mention of the subject melted good Mrs. Tibbles. She ceased pouring the coffee, and began to wipe her eyes.

"He went last night by the eleven o'clock run," volunteered Gilman.

"I never could help liking the young man," conceded Mr. Mull in a conciliatory manner, glancing at the landlady, "although I cannot say I respect his understanding."

"He has an excellent mind, Mr. Mull, and a good, true, noble heart," protested Mrs. Tibbles with almost a sob.

"Good true what?" asked Mr. Mull, with that obstinate inability to understand which was one of his customary weapons.

"Heart, — *heart!* Did you ever hear of such a thing?" explained Gilman in an irritated tone.

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Here the conversation ended.

As it turned out, Malcolm Bruce did not appear again among us. He found quarters at another place, on the same street but farther north, whither he went when he came back from Vermont. His trunk and books were sent to him. I was glad indeed to learn by an explanation from Mrs. Tibbles that Malcolm's bull of excommunication did not extend to her or to me.

"I think it is Mr. Mull," said the landlady, with a distressed face.

Anxious to see my friend and learn of his journey, I called on him at once, in his new abode. He had chosen well; and as he took me to his room, I could not but congratulate him on his pleasant surroundings and the change he had made. I saw in a moment that his errand had been successful. He was brimming over with good feeling; I had never seen that toss of the head and grip of the lips which

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characterized him in moments of success so observable as now. He intimated, with an air of triumph, that Mr. Mull had better not be too free with his jokes.

I learned afterward, from other sources, the entire history of Malcolm's journey and the full secret of his elation. It appeared that the scenes in Vermont had been as dramatic as those in Albany. He made his first application to the Rev. Mr. Newby, Helen's father. The old gentleman was overwhelmed, when called into his parlor, at meeting a powerful young man in what was almost a convulsion of feeling, and with a wildness of manner that was startling in the extreme. But Malcolm managed to explain himself, and almost literally went down on his knees in penitence and humiliation, as he told the minister his story. He could not have done a better thing for himself in the way of gaining the approbation of the father of his beloved.

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Strange to say, the old gentleman sided with Malcolm's original scruples, upon hearing the facts, and honored him for his long waiting and conscientious forbearance. As the matter was talked over between them and more fully explored, the Reverend Newby became proud of the young man, and was glad to know that amid the reeking corruption of New York politics there had still been one saving element, one righteous man in our capital city,—which municipality, by the way, the Reverend Newby had the grace to allude to frequently in his conversation as Gomorrah on the Hudson. I think he got the verbal notion from Bingen on the Rhine, which Helen used to sing to him.

It need hardly be said that Helen very naturally took the same view as her father, and exalted to a place among the stars the hero who had escaped the snares we had so wickedly laid for his conscience,—

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on her account. The first hint I had of this Newbian view, so to speak, came from Malcolm himself. He said to me : —

“After all I am so glad I knew about it before I ventured to act. Perhaps it would have been no wrong against any man or woman if I had gone forward before; but it was all done from the beginning with prayers and promises to the Almighty, mind ye, and would it not have been a lie to him, though it were no wrong to any, think ye?”

He asked this with such a look of awe upon his face, and so much feeling, that I thought it better not to discuss the question. But I remember that after being thus reproved, as it were, I soon bade him good-day, and walked away with the thought in my mind that though one should bray Malcolm in a mortar with a pestle, his peculiar notions would not depart from him.

In talking with Mull about him that

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evening, I mentioned the question Malcolm had raised. The third-house man seemed irritated by what I told him. He said : "Bruce is a dangerous man. There is no knowing what he may do. It is not safe to have him in the department. I know who got him in as clerk, and I know how to get him out."

Mull was not a man to talk at random, and I knew his power. But as it turned out there was no reason for apprehension. Within three weeks of the time when the conversation I have given was held, Malcolm hinted to me triumphantly that he had better business in view than being clerk in Albany. It was when I encountered him, one morning, in the green suburbs, out for his early walk.

"Just think of it," he exclaimed, with startling energy, after he had told of his better chance and that he had secretly determined on going, "the rascals here tax a man's salary for election expenses!"

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"And you will not submit to it?" I ventured.

"Not while my name is Bruce," he responded.

I felt that he was right this time, and shook him warmly by the hand while I commended his resolution.

"This is not a place for an honest man, sir; Albany is no place at all," he continued, soaring above me in a spiritual sense, as if he were giving me guidance and instruction.

It may have been a faint tinge of resentment on my part at his air of superiority that led me to think I detected an attempt at statesmanship in his speech. Perhaps it was an unconscious imitation, but I certainly seemed to hear an echo of that ding-dong oratory with which I was painfully familiar.

We stood it as well as we could when Malcolm shook off the dust of his feet against the city. He gained a better po-

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sition in New England than he had in Albany. It must be confessed that a blight, slight but perceptible, came upon the house of Tibbles, when it was known that Malcolm and the Vermont rose would visit us no more.

# A STRANGER IN THE CITY



## A STRANGER IN THE CITY

HIS name was Golden. He had been in town two days. He was tall and gaunt, with a shock of gray hair, and a voice like an ice-wagon rumbling over a cobble-stone pavement. It was in the parlor of Mrs. Granger's boarding-house in Jay Street, Albany. Only Golden, our genial landlady, and myself were present.

As we gathered around the winter evening fire, Golden continued his narrative. He had already told us that he was brought up "under the eaves" of the Green Mountains, that his sister Jane had inspired him while he was yet a boy with a desire for education, and that he had with her help managed to get halfway through college. Continuing his story, he said: —

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It was that shortness of funds that brought me to Albany thirty-one years ago. The understanding was that I might take a stop-off ticket for two years; and then, with plenty of money, which I expected to earn in the mean time, Jane and I calculated that the rest of my college course would be a splendid run, ending with a magnificent finish in black broadcloth on Commencement Day,—my clothes theretofore having been satinet and fustian.

You ought to understand first where I came from. Perhaps you have never been on the Green Mountains. I might as well tell you that what you cannot see of the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them from the top of old Mansfield is not worth talking about. On one side you have New Hampshire and the White Mountains, and on the other Vermont and Lake Champlain, and the Adirondacks. That tells the whole story,

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although remarks are in order, if any one is so disposed. I might suggest as an item of interest, that the mountain itself is covered with rocks, spruce-trees, and hedge-hogs.

Our folks lived at the foot of Mansfield, on the Vermont side. We called it twenty miles to Burlington, on Lake Champlain, and that was our road out into the world. A Vermonter who did business in Albany managed it with some of your city men so that I got a place as teacher in one of your public schools. And then down I came, as unsophisticated as you can imagine, but desiring and resolving to be the best and most faithful instructor in the world. I had never seen a large place before ; I was a stranger in the city.

But I am happy to report that my teaching was a success. I liked my scholars, and they liked me. I must state, however, another point which was not

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so favorable. I will preface it by saying that you have a habit of blackening characters here without much hesitation. Public men are usually the sufferers. Perhaps I was a public man in a very small way. But however that may have been, my point is that guileless and innocent as I was, I had not been here quite nine months when I got a slap with the tar-brush that marked me, apparently, for life, and scared me almost out of my senses. I do not say how far human beings were to blame in my case. Perhaps the total depravity of inanimate things had something to do with it. You have noticed that depravity of all kinds is of a blacker dye in political capitals than elsewhere.

What I am trying to get down to is this: they charged me here with stealing. That was what it amounted to. It seems ridiculous, but it is true. The idea that I had stolen thirteen dollars in bank

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bills out of the office of my friend Captain Brown, who was a shipper down on the dock, took possession of the minds of my scholars and their parents and others. The first hint I had of it was from my pupils. They began to treat me with disrespect amounting almost to contempt, and some of them made allusions to pirates and to Captain Brown which I did not see the force of. When information was asked for, they evaded my inquiries. It was impossible for me to understand the situation. Day by day, however, it became more certain that something was wrong, although I had no idea what it was.

I finally ascertained what the trouble was from a Vermont man named Avery, whose acquaintance I had made in the city. He did not seem inclined to tell me when I first questioned him, but finally disclosed the facts. It appeared that Captain Brown had been sitting in his

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office one morning with thirteen dollars before him upon his desk, waiting to pay the money to a mechanic, who was to come at an appointed hour. In the mean time the Captain was reading a volume that you may have heard of. It is entitled "The Pirate's Own Book." It is illustrated with hideous woodcuts, and the narratives are of a painful and revolting character. It is due to Captain Brown to say that he was not reading such a work solely for his own amusement. He was lamenting the fact that his nephew, Orlando Smith, should have a fondness for such literature. The boy, who was seventeen years of age and remarkably vigorous, was wild enough and bad enough without such reading. Just as the Captain was observing a picture in the book which represents a man's severed head, he heard an unusual noise outside, on the river or the dock. He placed the thirteen dollars in bills between the pages, closed the

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book upon them, and leaving the volume, with the money thus protected, on his desk, went out and walked to the brink of the river. He was absent fifteen minutes, but did not at any time lose sight of his office door. Your humble servant, on his morning walk, was the only individual who entered that door. So the captain said ; and when he returned to his office it was empty, and the book and the money were gone. As I frequently dropped in to say good-morning and ask the news, my friend Brown thought nothing of it when he saw me step in, and out again immediately. I had not seen him because he was partially hidden behind some boxes piled on the wharf for shipment. He had permitted me to go on my way without making his proximity known. It was inferred that I took the book and the money. As no one else had entered the office during the captain's absence, the inference seemed

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to be unavoidable. But the captain was a generous man, and, considering my youth and position, had intended to keep the matter a secret. It had, however, leaked out, perhaps through his family, or through the mechanic who had come to Brown's office for his money that morning only to learn that it had disappeared. The people had got hold of the story in some way, and were suspecting me.

As Avery related these circumstances, I became hot with anger. The idea that any one should dare to suspect me of stealing seemed wicked, incredible, and vile. My first impulse was to hasten to Brown and demand of him, in the upbraiding tone of injured innocence, whether he was not ashamed of his outrageous and dastardly charge against my sacred integrity. And if he was not, I yearned for the moment to come when I should see him wither beneath the scorn and con-

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tempt which I would pour out upon his miserable soul.

Avery cooled me down. I think that my flaming eyes and the demonstrations I made must have convinced him of my innocence; but he did not think they would have that effect upon the captain. He suggested that if I pitched into Brown, as I had threatened, I would shortly find myself in jail. The circumstances would justify my arrest at any moment. Avery hinted that he had already talked with Captain Brown about my affair, and that if I wished to get clear, I had better not provoke a man who was already sore over the loss of thirteen dollars. He remarked that the evidence was squarely against me, and that while this might be my misfortune and not my fault, it would be rash and foolish to disregard it.

I was compelled to feel that even Avery was not quite clear in reference to my innocence, although I think upon the

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whole he believed me. Yet it was puzzling. The money had disappeared from the office, and no one but myself had been there. It was not easy to blame even Avery for his doubts.

As I reflected upon these circumstances and realized the situation, a very uncomfortable feeling stole over me. The shyness of friends was accounted for, and the mystery in the air was no longer without explanation. The dejection which I began to experience was not lessened by the information which Avery volunteered, that Captain Brown would have consented to make complaint against me, and would have permitted my arrest, had it not been that he was a special friend of the man who had procured for me my situation as teacher. It appeared that only friendship had saved me from jail.

As the result of Avery's statement of the situation and his advice, I was re-

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duced to a condition of pitiable tremor. After I left him to go to my room, it seemed to me that every eye in the street was boring into me.

When I reached the small house which I called home, and had ascended to the close and dingy apartment in the third story which was mine (by the week), I found a letter on my table. The terms of that epistle were simple. I was directed to close my school at the earliest convenient day, and without further notice. The information was also conveyed that my services would not be required in the future. The letter was properly signed, and amounted to a very curt dismissal.

It was Saturday (and no school) when I got that news. What I suffered that day and the following Sunday, as I sat alone in my room, no mortal tongue can tell. I was, in point of fact, only a poor country boy, puffed up with a little college learning, and crying not only for

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my own sorrow, but for the injury to sister and mother and home. Of course you think you would not have suffered as I did. It is generally supposed that a person who is innocent will, when accused, be brave and defiant. But that is not true. It is the innocent who feel the keenest anguish. Ask any experienced criminal lawyer and he will tell you so. I never have endured more in my life than on the two days to which I have alluded.

Monday, at noon, I dismissed the school, telling them that I should no longer be their teacher, and venturing to say a few words of farewell. But their sneering faces made it almost impossible. They departed without saying good-bye, and some of them hooted as they went out of the door. I struggled hard to be manly and brave and not give way in the presence of the scholars whom I loved so well. But in truth I was cut to the

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heart. I have not told you how I had toiled for them, and had not counted my health or life dear to me, that I might succeed in teaching them and being their true friend. This was my reward. It gives me a chill even yet to think of it.

And now I come to another point. I have said that the scholars did not bid me farewell; but there was one exception. As I sat there at my desk, suffering and trying not to show it, a girl about fifteen years of age, with a handsome, sensitive face, brown hair, and bright hazel eyes, came back and stood looking at me, and biting her handkerchief, and seeming very sad and mournful. It was Phœbe Smith, the sister of Orlando, and niece of Captain Brown.

It had been my way and perhaps my nature to be rather dignified as a teacher. I had treated Phœbe as if she were a small girl; but she was really quite tall and womanly. When she stood and

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gazed at me in that wondering and mournful way, I knew that she expected me to say something. It touched me deeply to see that there was *one* who was willing to show me kindness. I asked as cheerfully as I could, —

“Well, Phœbe, do you wish to say good-bye?”

She did not come nearer nor offer to shake hands, but with her eyes fixed upon me continued to bite her handkerchief. Finally I asked again, trying to smile, —

“Would you like to say good-bye?”

She just shook her head and kept biting her handkerchief as if she were a little girl. Something began to come up in my throat as I looked at her. At last she opened her mouth and said with a kind of gulp, —

“I do not believe you took that money, Mr. Golden.”

I felt my face growing scarlet. I saw Phœbe put her handkerchief to her eyes.

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Then my lips began to quiver, and the first I knew I broke down, and throwing my arms on the desk before me, I buried my face on them. Some one came to the door and called, "Phœbe, Phœbe," and away she went; and that was the end of my school.

You can see for yourselves, friends, the position in which I was placed. Here I was in a large city, bearing a stinging disgrace. Our folks had always been very particular. There was not so much as a speck on the reputation of the Goldens. I had calculated to be high up in the matter of a shining name. Sister Jane and I had hoped I might be a minister of the gospel. That was my dream. A thousand times I had longed, as I walked my lonely round on our little farm and on the mountain, to engage in *some* way in the great battle of the world. And here I was in the midst of the conflict, and it was going dead against me. A thing had

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happened which was not dreamed of in my philosophy. If it had been the loss of health or friends, or the certainty of my own speedy death, I think I could have borne it well. All those troubles I had calculated upon. But when my good name was touched, I shrank and withered like Jonah's gourd. I had not learned the lesson that a man's reputation is in part the gift of God, and may be taken away at any moment. I find that this is a strange doctrine to many men. Job was the only one who believed it in his time and section of the country. I had never thought of it as really applicable except in the past among the martyrs. Of course I had supposed in a vague way that some such thing was true, but that was very different from experiencing and believing it. I have always been glad that I learned the lesson when I was young. Perhaps some men are not called upon to learn it at all in this life ; but if

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so, I think they die without their education being finished.

I am aware that there is a philosophy which says that a man (or boy) may be superior to adversity. That was the doctrine which delighted me and became my stay and support in college. Perhaps there is no better system for a learned professor with a comfortable salary. But when it comes to being turned out of a public school, I think the philosophy needs bracing. I distinctly remember that it did not sustain me after my scholars were dismissed for the last time, and Phœbe Smith had gone home.

Having locked the school-house door and got to my room, I reflected upon the strange events that had occurred. I did not know what to do. That day passed, and then another, and then a week, without activity on my part. I scarcely went out, except early in the morning to walk by the river in a place not much

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frequented. Thinking matters over, I gradually and very painfully came down from my high hopes, and decided that it would not do to go away, but that I must in a modest and manly fashion face the situation in which I found myself. It was a trying conclusion to come to. To think, innocent as I was, of going through life as a black sheep was hard. But I made up my mind to it; and I thought that a quiet place in a machine-shop under Avery, who was a boss, would be about my size.

Of course you will perceive that I took an exaggerated view of the horrors of my position. But I was sensitive, inexperienced, and alone.

It has never been possible for me to blame myself severely for the discouraging view I took of my life at that time. In memory, I see myself as I was then, often crying in my sleep until my sobs awoke me. I remember the dank and

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sickly air of the summer nights, and the stifling heat of the crowded city. That I had been disgraced and thrown aside, and that my greatest hopes in life were cut off, was, at any rate, a great reality to me. For what chance was there for a minister of the gospel who was known as a thief? And what chance was there to disprove the charge, amid a crowd of strangers, who had judged the case on evidence, and who now shunned me as if I were a leper? Perhaps I imagined more than was true. Yet I think it would not have been very unwise to have learned a trade. What would have happened in that direction if something else had not happened, I will not undertake to say. But something else *did* happen. The summer heats were coming on, and the close and tainted atmosphere and city food and mental suffering brought me down so that I took to my bed with a raging fever. The doctor pronounced it

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a severe case, and what took place after that I do not remember. I know that in some way Phœbe Smith was with me more or less, and that Jane came, and on the whole I had a serious time of it. But I pulled through, and in August, while the heat was still dreadful, and my room like an oven, Jane took me home. That summer in the city, with the sickness, is still, in my recollection of it, like a nightmare.

As soon as we reached Vermont I was better, and in a few weeks the country surroundings and quiet rest restored my physical frame, although I was still somewhat haggard with anxiety.

Jane had got the facts of my great trouble from Phœbe. We talked matters over. I could see that my poor sister was dreadfully hurt by my ill-fortune.

When the cool September days came, I seemed to drink in new life, and the gloom which had been gathering upon

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me in part passed away. Mother and Jane would not listen to the idea that I must give up my plan of life because of the occurrence at Albany. They tried to have it that my views upon that point were ridiculous and morbid. At times they seemed so to me ; but then, as I reflected, the facts would push themselves obstinately into the foreground. I did not feel that I could justify myself in standing before the world as a religious teacher, with such a record.

It was true in our place, as in most country places, that nothing pertaining to any of the people could be long unknown. Jane's going to Albany after me and all the reasons for it were well understood by our immediate neighbors and many other people of the town. I thought most of them took sides with me in the matter. Yet who could tell ? To determine that I would go out among my friends and face opinion required courage.

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I endeavored each day to steel my heart and gain strength to meet the trial. I formed some very good resolutions, but did not carry them out.

There was one point in regard to which I was decided and firm. It was my fixed intention to return to Albany and busy myself in a machine-shop, and meet the enemy in that silent, persevering way. It seemed to me that if I did not the thought of the stain upon my record would haunt me forever. My disposition was to attack the falsehood and fight it down if it took a lifetime. Jane was strenuously opposed to this. She said that she had not toiled for my education to have me throw it away. It was apparent that she had the advantage in the argument. She claimed that it was wrong for me to shrink from contact with friends as I did. When I pleaded for delay to grow stronger before pushing out into social life, she would not heed

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my excuses. I could not resist her pleadings. Jane arranged that I should lead the union week-day conference-meeting at our school-house, on Thursday, the seventeenth day of September, and I consented to do it. The day of the month and all the circumstances are impressed upon my mind. I dreaded that appointment more than any other of my whole life; and I am not quite sure that Jane was right in pushing me up to it. It would be very hard for me, even now, to stand before the people with a charge of stealing against me. Nevertheless, I was right in deciding to yield to Jane's entreaties. It was a matter of conscience with me. I did not let her know that it kept me awake nights.

On Monday, before the important Thursday, I went out of the house and across the pasture, and up upon some rocks with my Bible. I desired to study a subject for the meeting. There was

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a place where the September sun was reflected, and it was warm and bright. It had been my retreat for several days. I had been trying hard to find out how to agree with Jane about my course in life. On this occasion that subject kept forcing itself into my mind in spite of my efforts to banish it. But I had rid myself of such thoughts for the time, and had just settled down to the Bible lesson, when I heard a noise. I looked up and there was Jane coming over the grass from the house. She was calling aloud, and almost screaming as she ran. Jane always *was* a little nervous, but I had never seen her act quite like that before. I sat and looked at her for a while and listened.

I saw that there was something more than common the matter, and so I got up and went down off the rocks on to the grass and walked towards her. When I came near she was crying, and as I

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reached her, she threw herself on the ground, seemingly out of breath, her face twitching, and her lips working inarticulately. Presently she managed to find her voice, and then she cried out, —

“Oh, Sam, Sam, they have found the money, they have found the money !”

With this she held an open letter towards me and a piece cut from a newspaper.

Orlando Smith had been lost at sea and his chest had come home, and in it they had found the book and the money all safe, packed away with other books and wrapped in a piece of brown paper. In a minute I understood it. Orlando had run away, to go to sea, the very day the book and the money disappeared, and he had in some way got possession of them and had taken them with him.

I never could remember exactly how I spent the next five minutes after I had learned of this. Probably I was on the

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grass, crying. I remember that soon the sunshine seemed brighter than before, and an old familiar look that I had long missed came back upon the mountain. The valley again resumed that restful appearance which had been one of its greatest charms in my boyhood, and a spiritual light which was new to me began to dawn. From where we were I could dimly see Burlington. One of my first thoughts was that I could go there now without fear.

After a little while we went to the house and saw mother, who seemed ten years younger than she had been when I started out that morning. She was a still kind of woman whose feelings were very strong and deep.

The news that the book and the money had been found was not long in spreading through our town. One copy of the Albany newspaper which gave an account of the matter was taken in our

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neighborhood, so that some of the people learned of it in that way, and some received the facts from Jane. When Thursday evening came, I went to the conference meeting in a very happy frame of mind. I had slept soundly and eaten heartily for the first time since my sickness. I hardly think, as a matter of fact, I did anything very wonderful in the way of a speech that evening, but I became enthusiastic and forgot myself. As I was speaking and looking into the eyes of the people, I got talking fast, and then in some way they were in tears. I had no idea of being pathetic or eloquent, but I presume my feeling of thankfulness was apparent. Somehow, that talk made my reputation in the town. The people said I had a gift, and that preaching ought to be my occupation.

Here I reach a stage in my narrative where explanation is in order. The first

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point is to show how it happened that Orlando got into the office that morning and obtained possession of his copy of "The Pirate's Own Book," and the thirteen dollars inclosed in it, without being seen by his uncle. The newspaper presented a theory upon that subject revealing some curious facts and circumstances. It appeared in the first place that Captain Brown had a defect in his right eye which rendered that important organ substantially useless. But it was admitted by all his neighbors and acquaintances that his left eye was uncommonly bright and efficient, so that he was an excellent watchman. The newspaper remarked, however, that there was a scientific fact in regard to the vision of a single eye not generally known. It was this: In the normal eye of every person there is a blind spot, a little toward the outer angle from the axis of vision. This blind spot (of which we are wholly uncon-

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scious) may readily be detected by the aid of two large dots located to the right and left on a white page, and three inches apart. Hold the page, as in reading about twelve inches from the face. Close the right eye and look intently at the dot to the right with the left eye. The dot to the left will mysteriously vanish. It is covered by the blind spot. The experiment may be varied in many ways. Small black buttons or even nickels (if the adjustment of distances is exact) may be used with success. Objects on all sides of the dot (or button, or nickel) will be perceived out of the corner of the eye, but the dot itself seems to have melted into the white paper. If you look across a street and have the arrangement of distances in the same proportion as in the experiment I have suggested, a window or a door can be made to disappear in the same mysterious manner.

A man with only one eye is of course

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greatly surprised upon learning of this defect in his vision. He may think that he perceives the entire side of a house when in fact there is a place several feet in diameter which entirely escapes him. The newspaper stated that Captain Brown had become convinced that this defect in his vision, of which he was unaware until it was demonstrated to him, had prevented him from seeing Orlando on the important occasion in question.

You will readily imagine that Jane and I delighted in the curious experiment described so minutely in the newspaper. We found it entirely successful with every one who tried it, and a matter of amusement and surprise to all the neighbors. No one had ever heard of the blind spot before. But it was found a very complete and satisfactory solution of the mystery.

Here, perhaps, I ought to pause. Having presented a pleasing picture of

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my deliverance, the fitness of things warns me not to interfere with it. But it is important to tell the whole truth in this matter, and I shall not forbear.

I am sorry to announce that the joyful intelligence which lifted the dark shadow from my life was not in reality true, although its falsity was not discovered until years had passed away. In point of fact, neither the book nor the money which had been lost was found. The story which had been published in the newspaper, and which we had hugged to our hearts and rejoiced over and cried over, and from which I had gained health and vigor, was based upon a set of fallacious circumstances, curiously devised and falsely manufactured for my especial benefit. In behalf of my happiness and with a view to my relief, a pious trick, if there is such a thing, had been played by a kind-hearted girl. You can say that the presence of political and

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legislative management in this city had dulled her moral sense, if that is your view. I do not attempt to place the responsibility. All I affirm is, that a fraud which made every person who was interested believe that the book and the money had been recovered was planned by the brain and executed by the hands of Phœbe Smith.

In considering the act of which I am about to tell you, I think it right that you should remember how young she was, and reflect upon the motive which induced her to resort to deception. She believed in my innocence, and had seen as perhaps no one else could (except my mother or my sister Jane) the anguish I had been made to suffer. However wrong it may have been to deceive, it was certainly very noble to wish so earnestly to save me from deep sorrow.

The plan Phœbe adopted was simple and effective. She secured another copy

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of "The Pirate's Own Book," and wrote Orlando's name in it, imitating his handwriting, and adroitly placed it in his chest with money of her own, when, after his loss, the chest came back from sea and before it was supposed to have been opened.

I have already stated that Orlando ran away the very day the book and the money disappeared. This fact gave great plausibility to Phœbe's deception. Fortunately for my peace of mind, I did not know of her plot in my behalf until adventitious circumstances revealed it, long subsequent to the events I have related. Neither was it made known to any one. The secret was profoundly buried by Phœbe in her own breast. I have been amazed when contemplating the breadth and completeness of her deception viewed in connection with her youth and the sincerity of her heart. It would seem that from her own recollection of the

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lost volume, and from the captain's description of the money, she so succeeded in duplicating both, that no thought ever occurred to any one that the substituted articles were not the originals. Besides putting the book and the money so skillfully in the chest where they were discovered, she made the suggestion explaining the probable manner of the loss, which impressed itself upon Captain Brown and all the friends, and upon the newspaper reporter and the public, as the truthful explanation of the occurrence.

As one of the consequences of subsequent investigation, I am able to go back in the course of my narrative and state to you what poor Phœbe was doing when I was sorrowing over the dark calamity that had fallen upon my career. Her friends found out, long afterward, how she passed through various difficulties in obtaining thirteen dollars. A dealer in

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second-hand volumes identified, by his small label and price-mark, the copy of "The Pirate's Own Book" which she had purchased at his store and made use of as I have described. This searching and identification took place after Phœbe's death, and nearly four years after she was my pupil.

You can imagine what a curious task and labor of love it was for her associates and friends to trace out the ingenious goodness and strange deceit which had marked the achievement which she had buried from the eyes of the world. The hidden life of this young girl was found to be very interesting.

It came to light, in tracing the course of Phœbe's scheme, that her main anxiety had been to find some reasonable hypothesis that would account for the pretended fact that Orlando visited the office of his uncle and secured the book without being observed. When once the

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book and money were discovered in the chest, of course that left the burden of accounting for the mistake that apparently had been made, upon the shoulders of Captain Brown. It was for him to explain, if he could, how he had failed to see Orlando. Phœbe evidently dreaded this point, and made preparations of a subtle and curious nature to furnish her uncle with an excuse. It appeared that she had first taken into the account the fact I have already mentioned, that the captain had a defect in his right eye. And now I come to the point where Phœbe, as it seems to me, showed her greatest skill and power of combination. You may remember to have seen a curious book, found in many school libraries, entitled "Brewster's Natural Magic." In that work, which reveals, in a very plain way adapted to the minds of the young, some of the wonders of science, Phœbe found an account of the blind spot in the

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eye, and the experiment demonstrating it as I have described. Her application of it was ingenious. The first item remembered about it is that soon after the news of the loss of Orlando had been received, and while they were still waiting for the return of his chest, "the blind-spot experiment" came into vogue with Phœbe and her friends. It is remembered that Phœbe Smith first called attention to it, and devised various changes to render it more interesting.

Notwithstanding her youth, and the benevolent motive which influenced her, Phœbe died without having made a revelation of the deception she had practiced. I think we can understand how, in a moral atmosphere where successful political management is regarded with approval, she might have been led to associate such deceit in a good cause with virtue. I have been confirmed in this view by the fact that certain friends of

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hers have expressed to me their sense of the superlative merit of her effort in my behalf. Some of the women contemplated her heroism with wonder and tearful admiration. They made mention of her sacrifice of truth and veracity for me as the loftiest possible example of praiseworthy, womanly devotion. To do such a deed as she had done in my behalf, and pass away from earth without any mention of it, seemed to them an exhibition of human goodness that was extremely bright and dazzling. I am compelled to think that these kind friends admired her benevolence and its success all the more because of the trick involved in it. I hope not, but it has appeared so to me as I have talked with them about it. You may smile at this, but the whole matter strikes me as very serious. It seems wonderful to me that my happiness for years, and humanly speaking, my plan of life and my

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usefulness, were dependent upon the deception of this young girl.

All these phases were discussed by us when the genuine Orlando copy, so to speak, of "The Pirate's Own Book" was actually found,—an event which occurred soon after Phœbe's death, when the old office was pulled down for the purpose of rebuilding. There was then revealed behind the wainscoting, directly back of where the captain's desk had stood, the identical volume which had made the trouble, with the thirteen dollars in bills still undisturbed between the pages. It was remembered also that the roller of a large map which reached along the wall had sometimes been hit by a loose cleat on the old office door, and it appeared that the roller thus moved must have pushed the book off the desk into an opening there was in the rough boarding. About that time the captain confessed that he had always dimly felt that the

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money found in Orlando's chest was not exactly the money which had been lost. It was not until this revelation brought to light the true copy of the book and the real state of the case that Phœbe's benevolent scheme was suspected and investigated. It was then that her goodness was so commended by those who had been her associates. I do not say it was wrongly commended. Indeed, I would be an ungrateful wretch if I could entertain the shadow of a thought against her. I try to think that only the kindness and heroism and love were Phœbe's, and that the influences which had poisoned the moral atmosphere around her were responsible for the deception.

# MR. GREEN'S PROMISE



## MR. GREEN'S PROMISE

THIS is the Schoolmaster's story, which he told me in his room one winter evening after we had discussed the obligation to be always absolutely truthful :

There was a man, named Joseph Samson Green, who made a peculiar promise to his wife, Jane, which I will tell you about when I have told who these people were and the circumstances. The time was in 1843, and Mr. and Mrs. Green were a few years younger than the century. They lived in a remote village near the St. Lawrence River and in sight of the Adirondack Mountains. I was a small boy there then.

It is not easy now, to understand what it was to be haunted, as the people were in those days in the lonely settlements.

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The time of witches had gone by, but ideas had their victims. There was no news to relieve the pressure of reflection. Please remember that we did not have railroads or frequent newspapers or the telegraph in those early days. In the dreary winters many miles of snow separated our village from the other hamlets which dotted the vast waste. We were almost as lonely as Crusoe on his island.

The village, thus shut away from the world, troubled itself with profound questions. For speculation was mysteriously in the air at that time. Great events were supposed to be hovering near. "The final consummation of all things," the end of the world, was near at hand. This fact was exciting many communities. And when such an idea got into a lonely village it would buzz there all winter, like a big fly in a glass bottle. There was no way of getting it out, because there was no outside influence near enough "to

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change the tune," or break the spell of the isolation.

Joseph Samson Green, whom I have mentioned, was an intense little man, with curling black hair, and a very pleasant face. It was a joy to me to hear him pour out his heart in hymns, in his shop where he made furniture. He was too shy to sing or talk in meeting. He was too shy to say much about that supernatural world whose oppressive atmosphere had descended upon the village and was brooding over it like a murky cloud; but it was apparent that its presence filled his soul with sadness and solemn dread. He had the tender, loving ways of a child. He was nearly forty years of age and I but eleven, yet I found in him a companion. It seemed to me that his wife, Jane, was like a mother to him, although she was younger than he. She had a thin face and a long, straight nose. We were afraid of her; Joe would hide

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our checker-board when we saw her coming to the shop.

Jane was publicly as well as privately the head of the family. It was her voice that was heard in meeting. In singing she poured out a shrill treble with startling effect, — especially when it came suddenly on the stillness. It was the way then to break out into song rather unexpectedly in the evening assemblies. Jane and a friend of hers had something about “sounding through the air” that always alarmed me. It echoed against the plastered walls and made the tallow candles flare. The phrase I have quoted came in at the close of each stanza, and was delivered in a high, mournful, piercing tone which greatly influenced my imagination. I think the song described the end of the world and the day of judgment.

There was but one public act of which Joseph seemed to be capable, and that

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was playing the key-bugle. He played it, standing in the door of his shop; and as the blast rang through the village he was always greatly excited about it. He evidently regarded this lively music as a protest against the prevailing solemnity, and as a kind of rebellion. For it was no time to be playing key-bugles when such a cloud rested upon the town and the end of the world was at hand. He would retreat from the door of his shop and hide his bugle if he saw a minister or a deacon coming down the street.

We did not know about the promise that Joe made to his wife until after Jane died. She went away in the stage to visit her parents in Vermont. That was in June and she was to be away until October. But in August a letter came for Joe saying that Jane was very ill with a fever. Then Joe packed his trunk and started for that far-off place, which he had never seen, where his

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wife was. He had been very lonely without her: but he was more than lonely, he was quite broken down, when he came back with the sad news that he had been just in time for the funeral. Jane had died three hours before he got there.

It was indeed a dark time for Joe after that. He settled down to work as usual, but he was very sorrowful. Many kind hearts gathered around him, however, and before six months had rolled away his trusting nature had begun to cling tenaciously to a new support. Within a year it became evident that Miss Mary Lane, Deacon Lane's daughter, was getting a firm hold of the sceptre which had fallen from the hands of Jane. Everybody was delighted when this was discovered, for Mary was a favorite. A few more months passed and then it was announced that the day had been fixed for the wedding.

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Just here it was that the effect of the peculiar promise to which allusion has been made began mysteriously to appear. This was in connection with my visits to the shop. I could not help alluding to Mary Lane, who had been my teacher, and shyly saying just a word about Joe's good fortune. Freckled Billy Crosby, who was a year older than I, was with me and kept me in countenance, and added a few compliments of his own, hesitatingly. We never would have dreamed of taking such a liberty with any man but Joe. It would have seemed absurd to us to mention such a matter even to him if we had said anything more than that we were glad Mary Lane was coming to live at his house. That was the way I stated it, and Billy's allusion was equally remote. It then wanted only two days of the wedding. Joe took our shy, boyish congratulations very kindly. He stopped his work and sat

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down on his hewing-block while I stood at his knee and Billy by my side. Joe looked solemnly in our faces with a steadfast gaze, and he said he thanked us and was glad we were so kind. There was something very grave about his manner that I had not seen there before. I felt then that Joe was truly a man. He gazed at us for a long time without saying a word,—so long that we began to wonder. Then a pitiful, beseeching look came upon his face, the corners of his mouth drew down, and he suddenly burst into tears.

What could it mean? Was Joe crazy? Had we wounded him in some way? We could make nothing of it. Billy and I slunk away from the shop and left poor Joe crying alone by himself. But we speculated about his sorrow: it was a grand subject for boyish romance. Billy declared, in his impulsive manner, that there was trouble on that man's

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mind, and that he had never before felt so kindly toward any one.

The wedding was to be on Thursday evening. In the morning of the wedding-day, Billy and I ventured to go again to the shop. We had some doubt whether Joe would be there at such an eventful period, but the door yielded to Billy's push and we advanced. It was a bright morning, and the sunshine came in at an east window, fully illuminating the interior. We heard no voice or sound, but an object met our gaze which brought paleness to our young faces. It was Joe, hanging by two harness straps (around his neck) from a beam just over his head. His face was turned from us, and his feet nearly touched the floor. We saw a movement like shrugging his shoulders. Then Billy proved himself to be brave. He rushed forward and placed the old shop chair without a back, on the top of

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the hewing-block which was by Joe's feet. He stepped on the block, then up onto the chair, and told me to hand him the axe. I did so, and he tried to strike upward with it and sever the straps. But this was a failure. Joe's head was greatly endangered, but the straps were not reached. Billy handed me the axe, and having stepped down to the floor, rushed to the door and cried *murder*. In the meantime it was my feeling that poor Joe was choking to death, and I hesitated between the scheme of lifting him and putting his feet on the hewing-block and the plan of getting up overhead and cutting the straps on the top of the beam. In a moment I had decided, and got upon the work-bench: then I put a foot on the window-sill, and then in a brace, and so climbed up to the top of the beam. I had done it before in play. Billy handed me the axe and I cut the straps. Joe sank down limp and

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purple. Billy's cry had secured attention, so that two men and a woman were coming, and he now ran out again, shouting for help at the top of his voice. In a few minutes the shop was full, and Joe was sitting on the hewing-block with the straps still hanging loosely around his shoulders, and his hands over his face, crying and bewailing himself in great shame and sorrow. A little later he was taken to his house, and then the secret came out, to the amusement of some heartless persons and the surprise of all.

Joe confessed that he had no right to marry. He said he had promised Jane that she should be his only wife and true love. He had agreed that if she should die he would mourn for her to the end of his life. He professed not to know exactly how it was that he had been such a crazy fool as to fix those straps in his shop. He did not think it was really

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his intention to hang himself. But he got on the block and was tempted, and whether he really slipped off or stepped off on purpose he would not be just exactly and entirely sure. Although, to tell the whole truth, he said, it was all his fault and he knew his friends must despise him for it for evermore.

With such convulsive utterances poor Joe filled up a quarter of an hour, and then became quiet. His friends did not despise him; they pitied him most profoundly. The wedding, set down for that very evening, was, of course, indefinitely postponed, Joe declaring in the meantime, with sobs and tears, that he loved Mary Lane better than his own life. No one doubted this, but the idea of marrying a man in the evening who had hanged himself in the morning for such a cause was incongruous. Mary said, with deep tenderness and noble candor, that she loved Joseph as truly as

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before, but that she thought she ought not to marry him.

So there was no wedding, and the gossips made many suggestions and had many stories to tell. They did not fail to bring Jane over the coals, although she had so recently departed. That she had been jealous of her husband was affirmed. It was suggested that this had been the reason why she had extorted such a promise from him. A few women who had secretly been guilty of the same wrong toward their husbands tried at first to say a good word for Jane, but the popular feeling was so much against this that they took back all they had said.

Joseph continued very sad and mournful. A blight rested upon him in spite of all that friends could do to cheer his spirit. There was a little quiet discussion in regard to the obligation he had assumed. Whether a man could morally bind himself to blight his own life and

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be required to do a wrong in that way, was timidly and privately questioned. But no one was bold enough to come out and say that it would be right for Joseph to tell an awful lie to that dead woman! It was a solemn time. The end of the world was near. Joseph had been almost in the jaws of death. The current of thought turned toward the idea that in view of the situation it would be especially suitable for this afflicted one to give all his attention to the matter of making preparation for the world to come. Joseph himself was much too reserved to say anything on this subject except when his conscience compelled him to do so. In a quiet manner of his own he sympathized with the views of Deacon Lane and his family, who adhered to the old ways and refused to be excited or attend the meetings which disturbed the town. Joe made up his mind, during those days so dark to him, that he would join him-

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self to the old church where the Deacon and Mary were. That church had survived the raging storms and *isms* of the time. Deacon Lane claimed that so much as was left was solid. Its membership was very small. Strong pillars had been swept away. It is impossible to tell here the thrilling story of the churches. It is enough to say, that amid the lashing waves there was this place in the village where the rock remained, and dear Joe was wise enough to place his feet upon it. In his simple-hearted fashion he confided to me in his shop one day his decision that he would go to the old place for his membership. He knew that I attended there and felt that he could afford to talk to me upon the subject. Jane had been a member at the new place, where all the *isms* were running their course, and where almost every week there was something new sounding through the air. Joe explained to me

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that it might have been all right for Jane, but that he was never quite able to stand it. He said that he did not like the midnight baptism, the spiritual affinity, the doctrines of Perfectionism, or the excitement about the end of the world. That he had almost lost his mind through these doctrines was one of his theories. I could see that he mourned over that unfortunate hanging affair and was very anxious to account for it. So many had become insane through the wild excitements of the time that he had plausible ground for urging his view. There were a dozen instances in town to support him. He alluded to these, but did not mention his promise to Jane which had been the main element in his trouble. That was too sacred to be found fault with.

The members of the old church were more than glad to welcome Joe to their number. His unpretending goodness had won their hearts and led them to believe

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in his piety long before he applied for membership. And when he came to stand with them, something of that weak and almost childish manner which had characterized him seemed to leave him. Young as I was, it was my thought that Joe's main defects had been born of those meetings and strange ideas and things which seemed to be ever sounding through the air. The little I was allowed to see and hear of them had a strange, dazzling, and bewildering effect upon me, which to this day I find it difficult to account for. There was an influence that alarmed and subdued. I wondered, even then, that sensitive, trusting Joe had escaped with so little damage, and I frankly told him so. He replied by saying that since he had decided to unite at the old place, he had felt that the opening heavens would round him shine with beams of sacred bliss. Whether this expression was a quotation, I do not know, but it

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was his favorite saying on the subject. He repeated it frequently, and with a peculiar monotone, as if it were a poem.

It was reckoned a joyful occasion and a triumph among us when Joe, handsomely clothed and fully in his right mind, came forward in our church, made profession of his belief, and joined the faithful ones. My father was a missionary, having general charge of that little church, sent to that region by high ecclesiastical authority to care for various churches and save the things that remained. It was a difficult commission and every gain was important. The spiritual battle raged around Joe to begin with, and law and order were in his case triumphant. The conquest of Joseph was the beginning of a much greater victory. Others soon came forward, and men and women who had been swept away returned in scores and renewed their allegiance. In the midst of this pro-

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sperity there came a happy day, which threw a gleam of gladness upon the life of Joseph Green, and was very favorable to the work in behalf of the people. My father received a letter from Vermont. It was an important event in those days when it cost so much to send letters and so few were written. We, of the family, gathered around our sire as he broke the wafers and unfolded the paper (sealed after the fashion of the time), expecting him to read it silently and then tell us briefly what it was. This would have been according to his custom. But now as he read and we watched his face, he became strangely agitated. We noticed that he took a ten-dollar bill out of the letter when he opened it, and hence we thought it must be a money transaction,—but why was he so moved? There were several pages, and as he continued to read his emotion increased; and after he had completed the reading and folded

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the letter it was evident, for several minutes, that he could not say a word. When at last he tried to tell us that Joseph Green's wife, Jane, before she died had — That was as far as his feelings would allow him to go. But eventually he read the letter aloud. It was from the aunt of Jane. The good lady began her epistle by complimenting my father upon his success in restoring the churches where he was laboring, and his zeal in the ministry. She begged leave to enclose ten dollars as a contribution to the mission work he was doing. Then she went on to explain that she had very recently learned the history of Joseph Green as it had been since his wife's death, and that this information (coming from a friend) had laid upon her an important duty. She had helped to nurse her niece, Jane, in that sickness which had proved fatal, and Jane had then told her that if she was taken away, it would

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be well for Joseph to marry again. The aunt had wondered a little at the time why Jane alluded to this, and why she urged that if Joseph should wish to marry he should be told of her words about it. Jane had returned to the subject several times, saying that Joseph was of a very kindly, trusting nature, and ought not to live alone. The aunt had thought but little of the vague message to Joseph, because it had seemed unimportant and she had not known that he thought of marrying again. She could not give him such a message in the days of his mourning; and she confessed that she had supposed the entire train of thought and the message grew out of the fever rather than any existing facts. She desired to convey the message through my father, and to acknowledge to Mr. Green that she had been a little negligent. She added to this the statement that her niece was very kindhearted, and that she, her aunt,

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positively knew that nothing could give Jane greater pleasure, looking down from her home above, than to see Joseph happily married. She begged to assure Mr. Green (with whom the family had but little acquaintance) that he would obey the wishes of his wife, and act in accordance with the views of her relatives, by contracting a second marriage. This was the substance of the letter.

My father tried to be a stern man, but feeling the interest of a pastor, he could not read this letter to us without faltering; and his eyes overflowed as he ceased, and laid it aside. He consulted with my mother in regard to the best way to communicate the intelligence, and being advised that in such a matter there is no time like the present, he took his hat and went immediately on his errand. How the parties received the news we never knew, except from the fact that when my father came back he could hardly

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speaking upon the subject, and was evidently happy about it for several days.

News of the letter spread through the town, and there was much talk about it. Soon it was known, also, that advantage of the situation would be taken by the parties principally interested. We thought we could not enough admire the nobleness with which Mary waived all those maidenly objections which she might have made, and plainly said that she loved Joseph and thought he had done right. And we were equally delighted with Joseph, who said that the discipline of his trouble had been good for him, and that he loved Mary in a better way now than before, and more dearly and truly.

At the request of Deacon Lane the ceremony was in the church. The bell was rung and the choir and bass-viol were in attendance. A church wedding was a novelty in the place and called out the

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young folks. All were much pleased. The occasion helped to bring back the people from their interest in nightmares. The world had not come to an end, the murky cloud was breaking and day began to dawn.

Soon after Joseph's wedding, we left the village and returned to our home in the Mohawk Valley. I never saw the village again, but have always remembered it with the wild bugle-notes flying over it, and then the glad wedding-day, and the passing away of the murky cloud and gloom.

I thought this was all of the story until three years ago when I met a quaint and chatty old lady at Saratoga. She was from New Hampshire. We got to talking about old times and the *isms* and strange occurrences we had known. She had once been a Perfectionist, but thought she had returned to about the common view. I mentioned Mr. Green's

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case as an illustration of the effect of *isms* upon the mind. When I spoke of his wife, Jane, and her visit to Vermont, the old lady remarked with sudden enthusiasm that she knew the very persons I was talking about, and was familiar with the Vermont side of the case. She said that being a cousin, she had visited in Vermont at the very time Jane did, and partly because Jane was there. She had seen her in that last sickness ; and she gave it as her understanding of the matter that Jane never really sent any direct message to Joseph as represented.

“Do you mean to say,” I asked severely, “that the aunt wrote an untruth in that letter?”

The old lady replied that the aunt was a very capable woman and wrote just what Jane ought to have said and would have said if she had not been delirious. And then she asked me reproachfully whether I would have left poor Jane

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with a blight, a "cruel, withering blight," resting forever on her memory. She also explained that Jane was a *very* good girl, and always did exactly as her aunt told her, and in all fairness must be supposed to have acquiesced in the word sent in this case.

"But if she did not *say* it," — I protested with a feeling of exasperation.

"But she *did* say it," persisted the old lady, "that is, her aunt said it for her. And you know yourself that Jane must have said it in the tomb."

"Must have said it in the *tomb*!" I echoed with indignation.

But the old lady got up quickly and went away, evidently grieved and alarmed.

Across those far-off, boyish memories I felt a chilling shadow fall. I could not but wish I had not heard of the deception. But my sadness passed with the morning hours. For the old lady came again to converse; and she made me feel

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how kind the hearts were that had done this thing. All that August afternoon, we gazed at the golden summer clouds, and talked of friends and of the beautiful city where death never enters, *and nothing that maketh a lie.*



IN SLAVERY DAYS



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FIRST, as my grandfather used to tell, there were the woods and the Oneida Indians and the Mohawks; then the forest was cleared away, and there was the broad, fertile, grassy, and entrancingly beautiful Mohawk Valley; then came villages and cities and my own unimportant existence, and at about the same time appeared the Oneida Institute. This institution of learning is my first point. The Oneida Institute, located in the village of Whitesboro, four miles from Utica, in the State of New York, consisted visibly of three elongated erections of painted, white-pine clapboards, with shingle roofs. Each structure was three stories high and was dotted with lines of little windows. There was a

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surrounding farm and gardens, in which the students labored, that might attract attention at certain hours of the day, when the laborers were at work in them; but the buildings were the noticeable feature. Seated in the deep green of the vast meadows on the west bank of the willow-shaded Mohawk, these staring white edifices were very conspicuous. The middle one was turned crosswise, as if to keep the other two, which were parallel, as far apart as possible. This middle one was also crowned with a fancy cupola, whereby the general appearance of the group was just saved to a casual stranger from the certainty of its being the penitentiary or almshouse of the country.

The glory of this institution was not in its architecture or lands, but in that part which could not be seen by the bodily eyes. For, spiritually speaking, Oneida Institute was an immense batter-

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ing-ram, behind which Gerrit Smith, William Lloyd Garrison, and Rev. Beriah Green were constantly at work, pounding away to destroy the walls which slavery had built up to protect itself.

Mr. Green was president of the institute, and was the soul and heart and voice of its faculty. His power to mould young men was phenomenal. It was a common saying that he turned out graduates who were the perfect echo of Beriah Green, except the wart. The wart was a large one, which, being situated in the centre of Mr. Green's forehead, seemed to be a part of his method to those who were magnetized by his personality or persuaded by his eloquence.

Perhaps about two students in each hundred at the Institute would be colored.

About 1845, when I began to be an observing boy, it was understood through-

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out Oneida County that Beriah Green was an intellectual giant, and that he would sell his life, if need be, to befriend the colored man. Oneida Institute was a refuge for the oppressed, quite as much as a place where the students were magnetized and taught to weed onions. Fifteen years before John Brown paused in his march to the gallows to kiss a negro baby, I saw Beriah Green walk hand in hand along the sidewalk with a black man and fondle the hand he held conspicuously. Among his intimates were Ward and Garnet, both very black, as well as very talented and very eloquent.

We were taught that it was a matter of duty to subdue our feelings of prejudice against color. Young as I was I am sure I came to sympathize truly with the black man, and with those who advocated the abolition of slavery.

When "the friends of the cause" met

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in convention, I sometimes heard of it, and managed, boy-like, to steal in. When I did so, I used to sit and shudder on a back seat in the little hall. The anti-slavery denunciations poured out upon the churches, and backed up and pushed home by the logic of Green and the eloquence of Smith, were well calculated to make an orthodox boy tremble. For these people brought the churches and the nation before their bar and condemned them, and some whom I have not named cursed them with a bitterness and effectiveness that I cannot recall to this day without a shiver. The dramatic effect, as it then seemed to me, has never been equaled in my experience.

That these extreme ideas did not prosper financially is not to be wondered at. The farm was soon given up, then the buildings and gardens passed into other hands, and the institution became a denominational school, known as the

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Whitestown Baptist Seminary. But the ideas which had been implanted there would not consent to depart with this change in the name and the methods of the institution. The fact that Beriah Green, after leaving the school, continued to reside at Whitesboro and gathered a church there rendered it the more difficult to eradicate the doctrines which he had implanted. The idea of friendship for the black man was particularly tenacious and perhaps annoying to the new and controlling denominational interest. It clung to the very soil, like "pusley" in a garden. It had gained a strong hold throughout the county. The managers of the institution could not openly oppose it. They were compelled to endure it. And so it continued to be true that if a bright colored boy anywhere in the state desired the advantages of a superior education he would direct his steps to Whitestown Seminary.

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It was here that I met the hero of my story, Anthony Calvert Brown. He was as vigorous and manly a youth of seventeen as I have ever seen. He had been among us nearly two months, and had become a general favorite, before it was discovered that he had a tinge of African blood. The revelation of this fact was made to us on the playground. A fellow-student who had come with Anthony to the school made the disclosure. The two were comrades, and had often told us of their adventures together in the great North woods, or Adirondack forests, on the western border of which, in a remote settlement, they had their homes. Their friendship did not prevent them from falling into a dispute, and it did not prevent Anthony's comrade, who was in fact a bully, from descending to personalities. He hinted in very expressive terms that the son of a colored woman must not be too positive.

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The meanness of such an insinuation, made at such a time and in such a way, did not diminish its sting. Perhaps it increased it. We saw Anthony, who had stood a moment before cool and defiant, turn away cowed and subdued, his handsome face painfully suffused. His behavior was a confession.

I am sorry to say that after this incident Anthony did not hold the same position in our esteem that he had previously enjoyed. Some half-dozen of us who cherished the old Institute feeling were inclined to make a hero of him, but by degrees the sentiment of the new management prevailed, and it was understood that Anthony was to be classed with those who must meekly endure an irreparable misfortune. But Anthony did not seem to yield to this view. He was very proud, and braced himself firmly against it. He withdrew more and more from his schoolmates and devoted his

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time to books. In the matter of scholarship he gained the highest place, and held it to the close of our two-years' course. In the meantime, his peculiarities were often made the subject of remark among us. His growing reserve and dignity, his reputation as a scholar, and his reticence and isolation were frequently discussed. And there was the mystery of his color. It was a disputed question among us whether the African taint could be detected in his appearance. Ray, the comrade who had revealed it, claimed that it was plainly perceptible, while Yerrinton, the oldest student among us, declared that there was not a trace of it to be seen. He argued that Anthony was several shades lighter than Daniel Webster, and he asserted enthusiastically that he had various traits in common with that great statesman. But, then, Yerrinton was a disciple of Beriah Green, and his opinion was not

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regarded as unbiased. For myself, I could never detect any appearance of African blood in Anthony, although my knowledge of its existence influenced my feelings toward him. To me he seemed to carry himself with a noble bearing, — under a shadow, it is true, yet as if he were a king among us. I remember thinking that his broad forehead, slightly Roman nose, mobile lips, and full features wore a singularly mournful and benevolent expression, like the faces sometimes seen in Egyptian sculpture.

I did not discuss the matter of his peculiarities with Anthony freely until after our school-days at the seminary were ended and he had left Whitestown. His first letter to me was a partial revelation of his thoughts upon the subject of his own character and feelings. He had gone to Philadelphia to teach in a large school, while I remained with my relatives in Whitesboro. He wrote me that he was

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troubled in regard to certain matters of which he had never spoken to any one, not even to me, and he thought it would be a good thing for him to present them for consideration, if I was willing to give him the benefit of my counsel. In reply I urged that he should confide in me fully, assuring him of my desire to assist him to the utmost of my ability.

The communication which I received in response to my invitation was to some extent a surprise. The letter was a very long one, and very vivid and expressive. He began it by alluding to the incident upon the playground, which had occurred nearly two years before. He said that his life had been guarded, up to about that time, from feeling the effects of the misfortunes which attach to the colored race. Living in a remote settlement and a very pleasant home, where all were free and equal and social distinc-

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tions almost unknown, he had scarcely thought of the fact that his mother was an octoroon. He had heard her talk a great deal about those distinguished French gentlemen who had in the early part of the century acquired lands in the vicinity of his home, and he had somehow a feeling that she had been remotely connected with them, and that his own lineage was honorable. He alluded specifically to Le Ray de Chaumont and Joseph Bonaparte. These two men, and others, their countrymen, who had resided or sojourned upon the edge of the great wilderness near his birthplace, had been his ideals from childhood. He had often visited Lake Bonaparte, and had frequently seen the home formerly occupied by Le Ray. While he had understood that he himself was only plain Anthony C. Brown, the son of Thomas Brown (a white man who had died some two months before his son's birth), he

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had yet an impression that his mother was in some vague way connected with the great personages whom he mentioned. How it was that Thomas Brown had come to marry his mother, or what the details of her early life had been, he did not know, being, in fact, ignorant of his family history. He conceded that it might be only his own imagination that had led him to suppose that he was in some indefinite way to be credited with the greatness of those wealthy landed proprietors who had endeavored to establish manorial estates or seigniories in the wilderness. He had come to understand that this unexplainable impression of superiority and connection with the great, which had always been with him in childhood and early youth, was due to his mother's influence and teaching. There was about it nothing direct and specific, and yet it had been instilled into his mind, in indirect ways,

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until it was an integral part of his existence. His mother had a farm and cattle and money. She was in better circumstances than her neighbors. This had added to his feeling of superiority and independence. The accident of a slight tinge of color had hardly risen even to the dignity of a joke in the freedom of the settlement and the forest. Looking back, he believed that his mother had guarded his youthful mind against receiving any unfavorable impression upon the subject. In his remote, free, wilderness home he had heard but little of African slavery, and had regarded it as a far-off phantom, like heathendom or witchcraft.

Such had been the state of mind of Anthony Brown. The light had, however, been gradually let in upon him in the course of an excursion which he and his comrade Ray had made the year previous to their appearance at Whitestown

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Seminary. In that excursion they had visited Chicago, Cleveland, Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester, New York, and Albany. They had strayed into a court-room in the City Hall at Albany, where many people were listening to the argument of counsel who were discussing the provisions of the will of a wealthy lady, deceased. A colored man was mixed up in the matter in some way, — probably as executor and legatee. Anthony heard with breathless interest the legal disabilities of colored people set forth, and their inferior social position commented upon. He learned that the ancestral color descended to the children of a colored mother, although they might appear to be white. These statements had impressed him deeply. They furnished to his mind an explanation of the various evidences of the degradation of the colored people he had seen upon his journey. Talking of these matters, he had found

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that Ray was much better informed than himself upon the entire subject. Ray, in fact, frankly explained that a colored man had no chance in this country. This was in 1854. Anthony suggested in his letter to me that he had probably been kept from acquiring this knowledge earlier in life by his mother's anxious care and the kindness of friends and neighbors. He explained that he did not mean to be understood as intimating that he had not some general knowledge of the facts previously, but it was this experience which had made him feel that slavery was a reality and that all colored people belonged to a despised race. After his return home he had carefully refrained from imparting to his mother any hint of his newly-acquired impressions in reference to the social and legal standing of the colored race. In the enjoyment of home-comforts, and in the freedom of the wild woods and waters, the shadow

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which had threatened in his thoughts to descend upon him passed away. He remembered it only as a dream which might not trouble him again, and which he would not cherish. Still, there was a lurking uneasiness and anxiety, born of the inexorable facts, which favorable circumstances and youthful vivacity could not wholly overcome.

In this state of mind Anthony, in accordance with the wish of his mother, came to Whitestown Seminary. His description of his first impressions there was very glowing. He wrote:—

“I cannot hope, my dear friend, to give you any adequate idea of what I then experienced. For the first time in my life I found kindred spirits. Your companionship in particular threw a light upon my pathway that made the days all bright and gave me such joy as I had never before known. And there was Ralph, so kind and true, and Henry

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Rose, so honest and faithful! I cannot tell you how my heart embraced them. It is a simple truth, telling less than I felt, when I say that I could scarcely sleep for thinking of my new-found treasures. You need to remember what it is to dwell in a rough country, isolated and remote from towns, to appreciate my experience. To me, coming to Whitestown was a translation to Paradise. It seems extravagant, yet it is true, that I met there those who were dearer than my life and for whom I would have died. The first warm friendships of youth are the purest and whitest flowers that bloom in the soul. If these are blighted, it is forever. Such flowers in any one life can never grow again.

“And this brings me to that sad day when on the playground Ray struck at me, and through me at my dear, loving mother. As he spoke those cruel words, the world grew dark about me, the dread

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fear which I had subdued revived with tenfold power, and upon my heart came the pangs of an indescribable anguish. Oh, the chill, the death-like chill, that froze the current of my affections as I saw the faces of those I loved averted!

“I went to my room and tried to reflect, but I could not. The shock was too great. During the week that followed I was most of the time in my silent room. I may well call it silent, for the footsteps to which I had been accustomed came no more, and the comrades in whose friendship I had such delight no longer sought my company. That dreadful week was the turning-point in my life. As it drew toward its close I realized to some extent what I had been through, as one does who is recovering from a severe illness. I knew that day and night I had wept and moaned and could see no hope, no ray of light, and that I had at times forgotten my religion and blasphemed. It

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is true, my dear friend, that I mocked my God. Do not judge me hastily in this. I was without discipline or experience, and I saw that for all sorrow except mine there was a remedy. Even for sin there is repentance and redemption, and the pains of hell itself may be avoided. But for my trouble there could be no relief. The thought that I was accursed from the day of my birth, that no effort, no sacrifice, no act of heroism on my part could ever redeem me, haunted my soul, and I knew that it must haunt me from that time onward and forever.

“I need hardly tell you, with your insight and knowledge, that these inward struggles led toward a not unusual conclusion. I allude to the determination to which multitudes of souls have been driven in all ages to escape the tortures of disgrace. I turned away from humanity and sought that fearful desert of individual loneliness and isolation which is

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now more sad and real to me than any outward object can be. To live in the voiceless solitude and tread the barren sands unfriended is too much for a strong man with all the aids that philosophy can give him. But when we see one in the first flush of youth, wholly innocent, yet turning his footsteps to the great desert to get away from the scorn of lovers and friends, and when we realize that this which he dreads must continue to the last hour of his life, there is to my mind a ghastliness about it as if it were seen in the light of the pit which is bottomless. I have not recovered, and can never recover, from that experience. You will infer, however, that I did not remain in just the condition of mind which I have endeavored to describe. He whom I had blasphemed came to me, and I was penitent. The teachings of good Father Michael at our home, the doctrines of our Church, and the examples of the

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blessed saints, were my salvation. Then I felt that I would dwell alone with God. And there was something grand about that, and very noble. The purest joy of life is possible in such an experience. Yet it is not enough, especially in youth. But I think I should have continued in that frame of mind had it not been for you and Ralph. How you two came to me and besought my friendship I need not remind you. Neither need I say how my pride yielded; and if there was anything to forgive I forgave it, and felt the light of friendship, which had been withdrawn from my inner world, come back with a joy that has increased as it has continued.

“Coming to this city of ‘brotherly love,’ I begin my life anew, and at the very threshold a painful question meets me. No faces are averted, no one suspects my social standing. A thrill of kindness is in every voice. What can I

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do? Must I advertise myself as smitten with a plague? I dare not tell you of the favors that society bestows upon me. It is but little more than a month since I came to Philadelphia, and during that short period I have in some strange way become popular. My sincere effort politely to avoid society seems only to have resulted in precipitating a shower of invitations upon me. Evidently the fact that I am tinged with African blood is wholly unsuspected. You understand, I think, how I gained this place as teacher in the school. It was through the interposition of Father Michael and certain powerful Protestant friends of his who are unknown to me. It was not my own doing, and I do not feel that I am to blame. But I will frankly tell you that it seems to me cowardly to go forward under false colors. One thing I am resolved upon, — I will never be ashamed of my dear mother. Where I go she

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shall go, and she shall come here if she is inclined to do so. As you have never seen her, I may say that she is regarded as dark for an octoroon, and with her presence no explanation will be necessary. But ought I to wait for that? She may not choose to come. How can I best be an honest man? It seems silly, and it would be ridiculous, to give out generally here as a matter for the public that I am the son of a negro woman. Yet I think it must come to that in some way. What shall I do?"

This letter caused me to think of Anthony and his trouble much more seriously than before. It was clear to me why he was popular. I had never met any young man who was by nature more sympathetic and attractive. The reserve and sadness which had recently come upon him were not to his disadvantage socially. They rather tended to gain attention and win the kindness of strangers.

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The question which his position presented, and about which he desired my counsel, troubled me. But, fortunately, after thinking of it constantly for two days, I gave him advice which I still think correct under the circumstances. I argued that he was not under any obligation to advertise himself to the public as a colored man. The public did not expect or require this of any one. But I urged that if he made any special friends among those who entertained him socially and with whom he was intimate, he should frankly make known to them the facts in regard to his family. I thought this would be expected, and I was convinced that such a presentation of his position, made without affectation, would win for him respect even from those who might cease to court his society. I further urged that he ought not, as a teacher, to isolate himself or shun those relations with families which would place

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upon him the obligation to make known his parentage.

Anthony sent a brief note in reply to my letter, thanking me heartily for what he termed my convincing statement, and expressing his determination to act in accordance with it.

Nearly two months passed, and then my friend communicated the further fact that he had gone so far, in several instances, and with several families, as to carry out the suggestions I had made. He thought it was too soon to assert what the ultimate result would be, but stated the immediate effects so far as he could see them. When he first made the announcement in regard to his color, many had disbelieved it. When his persistent and repeated declarations upon various occasions had convinced his friends that it was not a jest, but a reality, they had been variously affected by it. He thought some were politely leaving him, while

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others seemed desirous of continuing his acquaintance.

Ten days later I was not a little surprised to receive a letter conveying the information that Anthony's mother had arrived in Philadelphia in response to his invitation. He stated, in his letter to me giving this news, that he had now carried out his entire plan and was satisfied. His mother had visited his school, and he had introduced her to his various friends in the city. It seemed to me a mistake thus unnecessarily to run the risk of offending social preferences or prejudices; but I did not feel at liberty to comment upon the matter at the time.

In addition to the information conveyed, the letter contained an invitation which delighted me. Anthony wrote that he and his mother were about returning home. The long vacation would begin in a few days, and they wished that I should go with them for a visit.

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Few things could have afforded me greater satisfaction than this. The wild forest-country, of which my schoolmate had told me much, I regarded as peculiarly a region of romance and adventure.

My aunt objected to this visit, on the ground that it would not be well for me to associate with people of an inferior race or doubtful color. But the great sinfulness of this prejudice (as explained by Gerrit Smith, Mr. Garrison, and Beriah Green) was so strongly urged, that she permitted me to make the journey.

It was a beautiful morning early in July when we three, with a team and a driver, left the Mohawk Valley and climbed the Deerfield hills, making our way northward. On the evening of the first day we reached the hills of Steuben and gained a first glimpse of that broad, beautiful forest-level, known as the Black-River country, which stretches away toward the distant St. Lawrence. The next

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day we descended to this level, and, following the narrow road through forests, and clearings, and little settlements, and villages, arrived just at nightfall at the home of my friends. It was a small, unpainted, wooden house, standing near the road. Back of it were barns and sheds, and I saw cattle and sheep grazing. The zigzag rail fence common to the region surrounded the cleared lots in sight, and in front of the house, across the road, were the wild woods. A wood-thrush was pouring out his thrilling, liquid notes as we arrived. A white woman and a large, black, shaggy dog came out of the house to welcome us ; and a few minutes later I had the best room, upstairs over the front door, assigned to me, and was a guest in the domicile of my friend Anthony.

The location was a delightful one, about three miles west of the little village of Champion, near which was

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a small lake, where we spent many morning hours. From a height not far away we had glimpses, in clear weather, of the mountains, seen in airy outline toward the eastward.

My friend had the horses and wagons of the farm at his command, and we took many long rides to visit places of interest. On several occasions we saw the decaying château of Le Ray, which was but little more than an hour's ride to the northward of Anthony's home; and on one occasion we went a day's journey and saw the stony little village of Antwerp, and visited that beautiful sheet of water on the margin of the wilderness, known as Lake Bonaparte. Joseph Bonaparte frequently visited this lake, and he owned lands in its vicinity, and made some improvements upon them in 1828.

Anthony's mother was a tall, spare woman, with a wrinkled face and large, straight features. She seemed to me a

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curious mixture of European features with a dark skin. She used French phrases in a peculiar way, and was full of the history of Le Ray and Bonaparte and various members of the company that had undertaken to make of this section, in years gone by, a rich and fertile country like the Mohawk Valley. It appeared that the name which the company had given to this region was Castorland, which she interpreted to mean the land of the beaver. She had, among other curiosities, some coins or tokens which had been stamped in Paris on behalf of the company, and on which the word "Castorland," accompanied by suitable devices, was plainly seen. The one that interested me most seemed to have as its device the representation of a small dog trying to climb a tree. I was informed, however, that the animal was a beaver, and that he was cutting down the tree with his teeth.

After talking freely with the mother,

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Antoinette Brown, I did not wonder that Anthony had learned to honor the gentlemen who had come from France to this region in early days as among the greatest men in the world. I did not find myself able to discredit her realistic and vivid description of the visits of Joseph Bonaparte to his wilderness domain in a six-horse chariot, followed by numerous retainers. Neither did I find myself able to disbelieve in the accuracy of her picturesque description of Joseph Bonaparte's Venetian gondola floating upon the waters of Northern New York, or her account of his dinner-service of "golden plate" spread out by the roadside on one memorable occasion when he paused in his kingly ride and dined in a picturesque place near the highway. She told in a convincing manner many traditions relating to the enterprise which was to have made of the Black-River country a rich farming region not inferior to the Mo-

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hawk Flats. The fact that nature had not seconded this undertaking had not diminished Mrs. Brown's impressions of its magnitude and importance. The great tracts which had been purchased and the great men who had purchased them were vividly impressed upon her imagination. In reference to her personal history, except for a few allusions to life in New York City, she was reticent.

I remained nearly two months at the home of my friend, and became familiar with the places of interest surrounding it. The little lake was a memorable spot, for there Anthony first told me the full story of his experiences in Philadelphia. He did not conceal the fact that an attachment was growing up between himself and the daughter of his best friend there, Mr. Zebina Allen. The way to make his permanent home in the Quaker City seemed to be opening before him. That I should go with him for a few days to

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Philadelphia when he returned, to "see how the land lay," as he expressed it in backwoods phrase, was one of his favorite ideas. He made so much of this point that I finally consented to accompany him.

It was a rainy day early in September when we stepped off the cars and went to Anthony's boarding-place in the good old city that held the one he loved and his fortunes. I was introduced to various friends of his, and during the first twenty-four hours of my sojourn I was delighted with all matters that came under my observation. I was especially pleased with Mr. Allen and his daughter Caroline. But within two days I saw, or fancied that I saw, a curious scrutiny and reserve in the faces of some of those with whom we conversed.

I think Anthony was more surprised than I was when he received a note from one of the trustees intimating that im-

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portant changes were likely to be made in reference to the educational methods to be employed in the school, and that, in view of these changes, it was barely possible that some new arrangements in regard to teachers might be desired by the patrons of the institution. The trustee professed to have written this information in order that "Mr. Brown" might not be taken wholly by surprise in case any step affecting his position should be found advisable.

The circumlocution and indefiniteness of this letter led me to infer that there was something behind it which the writer had not stated. It soon appeared that my friend agreed with me in this inference. I could not but smile at the coolness with which he quoted the common phrase to the effect that there was an African in the fence.

"I fear it is the old story over again," he said; "but I am glad I have done my

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duty to myself and to my dear mother, whatever the consequences may be.”

After some discussion, it was agreed that I should call at Mr. Allen's office (he was a lawyer) and endeavor to obtain from him a statement of all he might know of the new arrangement announced in the letter which had been received. I lost no time in entering upon my mission. But I was compelled to make several applications at the office before it was possible for Mr. Allen to give me a hearing. A late hour of the business-day was, however, finally assigned to me, and just as the gas was lighted I found myself by appointment in a private room used for consultation, sitting face to face with Mr. Allen. I briefly stated my errand, and presented the trustee's letter to him as a more complete explanation of my verbal statement.

“Yes, I see,” said Mr. Allen thoughtfully, after reading the letter and return-

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ing it to me. And he tilted back his chair, clasped his hands behind his head, and gazed for some minutes reflectively at the ceiling. I sat quietly and studied his face and the objects in the room. He was a large man, squarely built, with straight, strongly-marked features, blue eyes, and sandy hair. In the midst of his books and papers he seemed to me a sterner man than I had previously thought him. "Yes, I see," he repeated, at the close of his period of reflection. And then he removed his hands from his head and placed them on his knees, and brought his chair squarely to the floor, and, leaning forward toward me, looked keenly in my face, and said, "Did I understand that you were one of those people, — that is, similar to Mr. Brown?"

"How, sir?" said I in bewilderment. "How do you mean?"

A moment later the purport of the question dawned fully upon me, or I

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should rather say struck me, so sharp and sudden was the shock I experienced. If there was anything in which I was secure and of which I had reason to be proud, it was my Puritan and English ancestry. As the blood flew to my youthful face in instinctive protest and indignation, my appearance must have been a sufficient answer to my interrogator ; for I remember that he, at once springing to his feet, offered me his hand, making profuse apologies and begging a thousand pardons.

I somewhat stammeringly explained that it was of no consequence, and proceeded to name the families in my ancestral line, adding the remark that these families, both those on my father's side and those on my mother's side, were pretty well known, and that they were the genuine English and Puritan stock.

"They are indeed, sir," said Mr. Allen, "and I congratulate you. I know the

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value of a good lineage, and I feel safe in talking freely with a gentleman of your standing in regard to this disagreeable business."

I found myself taking sides with Mr. Allen in favor of family pride and against "those people," as he had termed persons of doubtful color. I had instinctively defended myself against the suggestion that I might possibly be one of them. If this skillful lawyer had intended, as possibly he did, to disarm me wholly at the outset, so that I could make no attack upon the position which he intended to assume, he could not have done it more effectually.

"The truth is," said Mr. Allen cheerfully, "we regard Mr. Brown as about the best and most intelligent young man that has ever taught in our school. He is manly and conscientious to a fault. Aside from his family, the only trouble I find with him is that he is not politic.

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It was very honorable in him to state to us his parentage as he did. If he had been willing to stop there, possibly we might have managed it, — at least so far as the school was concerned. But it was not necessary and it was not wise to bring that colored woman here. It may have been remarkably filial and brave, and all that, but it was not judicious. I think you will agree with me that it was not judicious.”

I hesitatingly admitted that it probably was not.

“I felt sure that you would take a sensible view of the matter,” said Mr. Allen. “I am truly sorry that Mr. Brown could not have been more discreet. If he has imagined that he could push that woman into our society, he is mistaken. And now, while I think of it, there is a message which I should be glad to send to Mr. Brown, if you will be so kind as to convey it.”

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I expressed my willingness to carry the message.

“It has probably come to your knowledge that my daughter Caroline has won the admiration of Mr. Brown.”

I replied that Anthony had mentioned it.

“The truth is,” resumed Mr. Allen, “we entertained the highest opinion of the young man, and he has visited frequently at our house. I am willing to admit to you that the feeling I spoke of has been mutual. With your appreciation of the claims of propriety, the impossibility of a union will of course be apparent to you.”

“Then you regard it as impossible?” I asked.

“Yes,” he replied. “Do you not so regard it? Think for a moment what it involves. Some friends of ours in a Western city, as my wife was saying yesterday, have had a trouble of this kind a gener-

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ation or two back, and the children of the present family are in a condition of chronic worry upon the subject. They are wealthy, and are regarded and treated in society as white people; but the two young ladies use some kind of whitening on their faces habitually. The circumstances of the case are pretty generally known, and you can understand how unpleasant such a matter must be to the entire family. It is claimed that a tinge of color sometimes passes over a generation and appears more markedly in the next. I do not know how that may be, but the idea of the risk is enough to give one chills. There is a story that the Western family of which I spoke has a colored grandson concealed somewhere. Of course I do not know whether it is true or not; but it serves as an illustration.

“My message to Mr. Brown is, that, under all the circumstances, we think he

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should discontinue his visits at our house. I presume he will see that he should take that course. I shall always be glad to meet him anywhere except at my home. In regard to a business engagement, if he will allow me to say a word, I would suggest that he should teach our colored school. They are looking for a teacher just now, as it happens, and he would be very popular in that capacity."

I could not but admit that Mr. Allen's suggestions were characterized by practical wisdom, but I hinted that the course proposed seemed hardly just to Anthony.

"As to that," said Mr. Allen, "it is true that our laws and customs are unjust and cruel in their treatment of a subjugated race. But it is not wrong to avoid marriage with any other race than our own. As to the part that is unjust, you and I cannot remedy that. So far as we are individually concerned, we may deal justly with the downtrodden, and I hope

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we do so ; but the great wrong will still remain."

I left the office of Mr. Allen, feeling that he was in the right. I went directly to Anthony, and, with a heavy heart, reported to him the particulars of the interview. It was a painful shock, but he bore it with greater calmness and fortitude than I had expected. When I had concluded the recital, he remarked sadly that he found it impossible to say that Mr. Allen was wrong, hard as the truth seemed. He felt that marriage was out of the question, and said that he would not have indulged the thought of it if he had reflected upon the matter carefully. He was not fully decided what course he would pursue. It was too painful a subject and involved too great a change to admit of a hasty decision ; and he desired my best thoughts and counsel, which I gave him.

After two days I returned to Whites-

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boro, leaving Anthony in Philadelphia, still pondering the course he would pursue. Three weeks later I received a letter from him, in which he announced that he had taken the colored school.

Four months passed away. Then I received from my friend a long communication, setting forth rather formally his experience in his new position and unfolding to me new views which he had gained by reflection and contact with the world. He also presented the plan of life which he had decided upon, if I approved. I was greatly surprised at the entire revolution in his ideas which had been effected by his observation and his courageous mental struggles.

“My own thoughts,” he wrote, “have been completely changed by reading and reflection. There are three aspects of this subject which I wish to make clear to you. There is first the view that every colored man has some sort of strange,

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mysterious curse resting upon him by a law of his nature. The idea is that, although the black man in any given instance may be superior, spiritually, intellectually, and physically, to his white neighbor, yet he cannot equal him because of this mysterious curse. This view, sad as it is (advocated by the white race), has settled down upon the minds of millions of colored people. It has crushed out of them all self-reliance and independence. It fastens tenaciously upon the quiet, sensitive spirit, destroying its hope and self-respect and enterprise. I need not tell you how near I have come to being shipwrecked by its influence. But it is founded upon a lie. It is a lie backed up by the assertion, practically, of nations and of millions of intelligent persons acting in their individual capacity. It is, however, none the less a base, malignant, falsehood, robbing the spirit that is cowed and crushed by it of the sweetest posses-

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sions of life. A similar falsehood has established castes in India, and still another has subjugated woman in many lands, making her a soulless being and the slave of man.

“If any black man has greater wisdom, strength, and goodness than the majority of white men, he is higher in the scale of manhood than they. The real question involved is a comparison of individuals, and not of races.

“You will remember how Homer, in the ‘Iliad,’ praises the blameless Ethiopians, beloved of the gods and dwelling in a wide land that stretches from the rising to the setting of the sun. The ancient historians praise them also. Words of commendation of this great historic people are found in the ancient classics. So far as I can discover, the prejudice against color is of modern origin.

“I believe that at no very distant day the slaves will be liberated, and that

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the Almighty will be the avenger of their wrongs.

“I turn now to consider the second aspect of this subject. When a colored man is wise enough and courageous enough to embrace the views which I have presented, he may still be compelled as a part of his lot in life, to submit to the assumption that he is inferior. It is hard to live in this way in the shadow of a great lie, but it is better than to have the iron enter more deeply into the soul, so as to compel *belief* of the lie, as is the case with millions of human beings. When the spirit is enfranchised I can understand that one may lead a very noble life in cheerfully submitting to the inevitable misfortune. There are a few colored men who thus recognize the truth and yet bow to the great sorrow, which they cannot escape, with noble and manly fortitude. I confess that I have entertained thoughts of attempting such

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a life. I think I could do so if I could see that any great good would be accomplished by it. But my experience here has taught me that any such sacrifice is not required of me. I find that it is not to the advantage of the colored people to be taught at present. They tell me that as they grow in knowledge their degradation becomes more apparent to them, and their sufferings greater. They leave the school with the impression that for them ignorance rather than knowledge is the road to happiness. I cannot deny the truth of their reasoning. If they could be raised above the sense of degradation from which they suffer, it would be different. But, apparently, this cannot be done. It is at least impossible in the few years which can be given to their instruction in the schools now provided for their education. The prevailing sentiment among them is against education and in favor of a thoughtless and

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easy life. They do not wish to face those fires through which the awakened spirit, crushed by hopeless oppression, must necessarily pass. Only yesterday a young man described to me, with thrilling pathos, the anguish of spirit with which he had felt the fetters tightening upon him as his knowledge increased.

“I do not feel called upon, therefore, to devote my life to teaching. If there was hope left in the case, perhaps I might do so. I would labor on willingly if there were light ahead. But, with millions in slavery and others as tightly bound down by prejudice as if they were slaves, I see no encouragement. I think it the wiser course to wait, trusting that Providence will open a way for a change to come. And this brings me to the third aspect of this matter, and the last phase of it which I desire to consider. It seems to me to be my duty and privilege to withdraw from the unequal contest. The

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stupendous lie which crushes the mass of the colored race has not imposed itself upon me, although I have had a terrible struggle with it that nearly cost me my reason. I am not so situated as to be compelled to live among those whose very presence would be a constant shadow, a burden to me, and a reproach to my existence. Fortunately, I am not compelled to accept the great misfortune and bow to the assumptions of a ruling race. I can retire to the fastnesses of my native hills and forests, where petty distinctions fade away in the majestic presence of nature. I am already beginning to anticipate the change, and instinctively asserting that independence which I feel. Indeed, I have given offense in several instances. I have no trouble with solid business men like Mr. Allen. They have the good sense and fairness to recognize the fact that a man is a man wherever you find him. But some peo-

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ple of the fanciful sort, with less brains than I have, do me the honor to be angry because I do not submit to any assumptions of superiority on their part. I might be so situated that it would be wisdom to submit, to bend to a lie, to lead the life of a martyr, as some noble men of my acquaintance do under such circumstances. But, fortunately, I can afford to be independent, and I shall do so and take the risk of bodily violence.

“You have now my plan of life and my reasons for it. I shall adhere to it under all ordinary circumstances. Nevertheless, if Providence calls me to some work where great good can be done, I will sacrifice my independence and take up the load of misfortune which prejudice imposes, if that is required, and try to bear meekly the burden and do my duty in the battle of life. But I hope this may not be required of me. Around my home, as you know, are many immi-

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grants, foreign-born, who do not inherit or feel the prejudice against color. My family is already one of the wealthiest and most influential in our little community. With such property as I have and can readily gain, and with such school-teaching and political teaching as I can do, it is a settled thing that our standing will be at the head of society and business, so far as we have any such distinctions among us. To refer to the matter of color in a business light, I may remind you that its trace is very faint in our family line. Already it has entirely disappeared in my own person. With wealth and position it will be to me at home as though it were not; and when my dear mother passes away it will disappear entirely and be speedily lost to memory. I do not mean by this to shirk the position of the colored man, of which I have had a bitter taste. I only mean to show you the brightness

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and hope of my situation. I trust that you will approve of the course which I have marked out, and give me some credit for courage in meeting and conquering the grisly terror, the base lie, which sought to blast my life."

It would be difficult to express too strongly my admiration for my friend as I read the letter from which I have quoted. It seemed to me wonderful that he had been able so to disentangle himself from difficulties. The cool intrepidity with which he had fought his way through those mental troubles which had seemed at one time about to overwhelm him was to me the most astonishing part of the performance. I wrote to him in terms of the highest commendation, frankly expressing my astonishment at the vigor, truth, and force apparent in his actions and his reasoning. He was satisfied with my letter, and proceeded to close up his affairs in a deliberate and

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decorous manner before returning home and carrying his plan into execution. It was his idea that I should spend some months each year with him and he had made other friends who would be invited to visit him.

For three years only this plan was pursued by us. Matters were as I have described, when the war of the Rebellion broke out. Here was that call to public duty which he had alluded to as a possible interference which might change the course of his life. He felt from the first that the contest was a fight for the black man, and he was anxious to engage in it. In a hasty letter to me he recognized the fact that the spirit of John Brown, whom he greatly admired, was still busy in the affairs of the nation, although his body was sleeping in the grave at North Elba.

Anthony Brown enlisted in a white regiment, there being no trace of color

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about him and no objection being made. He claimed to have a presentiment that he would fall in battle at an early day. Whether it was a presentiment or a mere fancy, it was his fate. He now rests with the indistinguishable dead

Where the buzzard, flying,  
Pauses at Malvern Hill.

When I learned of his death, a duty fell upon me. He had written in one of his letters that if he did not return from the war he would like to have me tell his mother the true history of his life. He had concealed from her his struggles in reference to color. She knew nothing of his trials at Whitesboro or at Philadelphia. No words had ever passed between them upon the subject. He thought it better, if he lived, that she should never know, but if he died he wished that his history should be fully made known to her.

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I made the journey on horseback over the ground I have already described. It was a delightful autumn day when I passed through the village of Champion and went on to Mrs. Brown's home. She was expecting me, as I had written in advance announcing my intended visit. I could see that she was greatly pleased to receive me. I had been at the house two days before I ventured to introduce, in a formal manner, the subject of my mission. Talking of old times, and leading gradually up to the subject, I frankly stated that Anthony had charged me to tell her the story of his personal history, and I exhibited his letter to her. It was after dinner, as we were sitting in the front room reading and talking. Mrs. Brown immediately became excited and anxious to hear. As I disclosed the sorrow of Anthony's life and related the particulars of his career, the effect upon her was not at all what I had expected.

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She became more and more excited and distressed. At last she called sharply to her servant-girl, Melissa, and told her to go and bring Father Michael, and to bid him come immediately. While Melissa was gone, Mrs. Brown, with a great deal of agitation in her manner, proceeded to question me in regard to the incidents of Anthony's career in Philadelphia, and frequently broke out with the exclamation, "Why could we not have known?"

Soon Father Michael came, and the woman assailed him at once in a harsh and accusing manner, speaking in the French language with great volubility. He replied to her in the same tongue. There was only here and there a word that I could understand. It was plain, however, that there was a contest between them, and that it related to my deceased friend.

By degrees the matter was so far made plain that I understood that Anthony was

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not the son of Mrs. Brown, but was of the purest white blood and connected with people of rank. Beyond this I was not permitted to know his history. When I asked questions, Father Michael replied that it was better "not to break through the wall of the past." He said it was too late now to aid Anthony, but added that the trouble might have been averted if it had been known at the time.

A day later I took my departure. As I traveled back to Whitesboro I reflected upon the strange events that had shaped Anthony's career. When I turned on the Steuben hills and looked once more upon Castorland, it seemed to me a region of mystery; and the useless tears fell from my eyes as I remembered how one of its secrets had darkened the life of one of the dearest friends of my youth.

I subsequently learned that Miss Allen, of Philadelphia, suffered indirectly from the effects of Anthony's misfortune. She

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was not able to forget the man she had chosen.

I have never learned the facts in regard to the early history and real parentage of Anthony Calvert Brown.

# THE SECRET STORY



## THE SECRET STORY

LADY MARY: Here you may gain a glimpse of that hidden life of the Pathfinder, which is back of all the tales he has written and the little histories he has told you. Here he will bid you farewell (in these pages), as he shows you some of his experiences, in pursuing the mysterious pathways which all of us are treading in our lonely journeyings through the world. The little Secret Story of the Pathfinder is as follows:—

I remember a small boy, the one I knew best of all. On a day of the spring-time he was on the grass in a meadow by the river. His friend was with him, and there was a blue sky and white clouds overhead. The gentle breeze, the soft *susurrus* of the flowing stream, and the

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shining of the sun, became to him very beautiful, and he was suddenly conscious of a happiness beyond these, and of which he could not speak, and which he did not in the least degree know about or understand. It was nothing; it was formless as the viewless air. And yet it made his whole life broader and brighter, as it lingered with him for hours, slowly fading out in the joys of a strong, vigorous boyhood, with constant outdoor activity.

A few years later the visitation came again. It was by a waterfall. The summer day was bright as before. The nameless joy, coming so without cause or explanation, led the youth to wonder what this light might mean. It lingered for a day, and then slowly melted into the cool gray gloom of an energetic, toiling life of constant occupation.

And as time has gone by, at intervals of years this visitation has come again and again, and it has been the same silent

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joy under all kinds of outward experience and circumstances. And it ever leaves the life it visits broader, happier, and more beautiful than it finds it. In the wilderness, in the years of lonely living, it has come with peculiar power : in the days of toiling in crowded assemblies in the cities it has come, and the little boy, after so many years, still wonders and questions what it is. He has never mentioned it, or discussed the question with any one. He finds a few timid allusions to it in a very private journal kept in the time of his college experience. Aside from these hidden hints, no light of day has ever fallen upon this secret story. The boy always had an Achates. In his childhood and youth there were no secrets between him and this second self of his. From babyhood each read absolutely the thoughts and feelings of the other ; and yet Achates never knew this secret history. That sense of happiness was nearer than Achates.

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This one I have named Achates came to see me not long ago. He had been three years in the Civil War, and since that time in business, and had reared a family. I did not recognize him at first, and he did not know me. There were too many years between us,—since we had parted in wartime. But we spent days together. We went down by the river, and the two little boys of so long ago came out of their hiding. The intervening time rolled away. The war and the family were gone, and we were two children, the very same as ever. The flaws of temper, the quick turns of yielding and resisting, and all the peculiarities, were so childish and so accurately the same that we were startled, shocked, amused, and driven to the conclusion that we were not a day older in our essential selves than we had been in the earliest hours of our acquaintance. And yet with all this I did not venture to ask Achates

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whether he had thought or known of the dream, the vision, the visitation, that had so shaped my life and made it what it is.

The little boy still questions what it was that came to him so naturally that bright day in the meadow. He questions and he muses with no better wisdom than at first. But in that secret chamber where the little chap has lived so long, and where the "I myself within me" has wondered at the man who has slowly enveloped him and grown up around him, and whom he yet knows to be but dust and ashes, — in that calm retreat a guess has long been recorded. The little chap has even dropped into poetry about it. I find the secret lines in the same hidden journal of which mention has been made. Without copying the timid lines, I may give their purport, and thereby suggest a solution of the mystery.

After questioning : —

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“What is this strange, sweet silence stealing,  
From out dim spaces, far, unknown?”

The suggestion reads : —

“Is it a great and gentle spirit,  
In kindly converse with my own?”

The boy has not gone beyond this. He has been willing to assume that the great and gentle Spirit has used means. He has not thought it necessary to make biological insinuations. He has not cross-examined the molecules, nor suspected them of deceit or evil intentions of any kind whatever. On the other hand, he has been deeply grateful for the hours of vision that have been given him. He has known at such times that he has news, glorious news, of events happening he knows not where; and there is a joy of friendship, which he feels, but comprehends not. The sunlight, the sky, the lands, and the seas have become very beautiful. All the world and the life are

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full of light. In the lapse of hours or days this passes, but a vague consciousness remains of a lingering power which guides in the long journey. The little chap has read with reverence the history of Jacob and the Angels, the account of little Samuel, and the long line of sacred story which ever has been, is now, and ever shall be, the hope and the light of all the earth. He has read with confidence of the dreams and premonitions of Abraham Lincoln. He has questioned the records of the Society of Psychical Research, and has considered the probable extent of those subliminal possessions, now so often mentioned. Through all this, his own hidden story has remained the same. That joy which came so quietly and so long ago has not departed. In the midst of a busy life, below the eager career, this hidden story goes on and on, unchanging in its character, through its long, intermittent history.

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It is very true that it has been found possible, in every age and every land, to treat the story of the hidden life with derision. But it is equally true, always, that the story-teller can smile at Satan's rage, and it is often seen that he can face a frowning world.

When the little story-telling traveler packs up and gets ready to leave, and bids farewell to Dust-and-Ashes, who has so long enveloped him, and to this beautiful world, it is understood that he sometimes casts a longing, lingering look behind: but it is also understood by those who have vision, and so can watch him and know that his eye is not dimmed nor his force abated, that he quickly turns from the backward view, when he is leaving this world, and with glad alacrity hastens on his journey home.

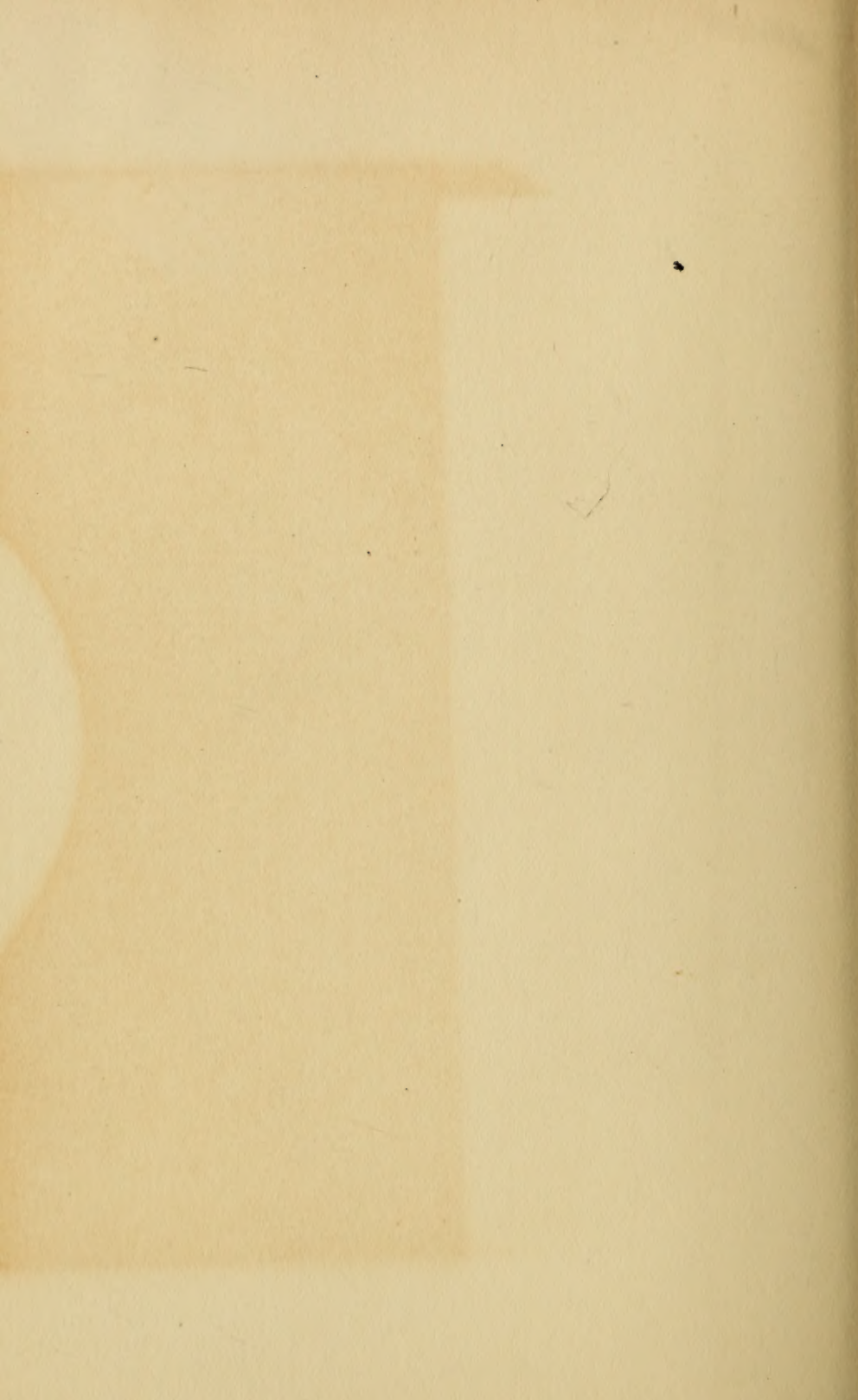


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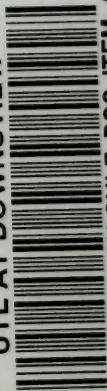
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